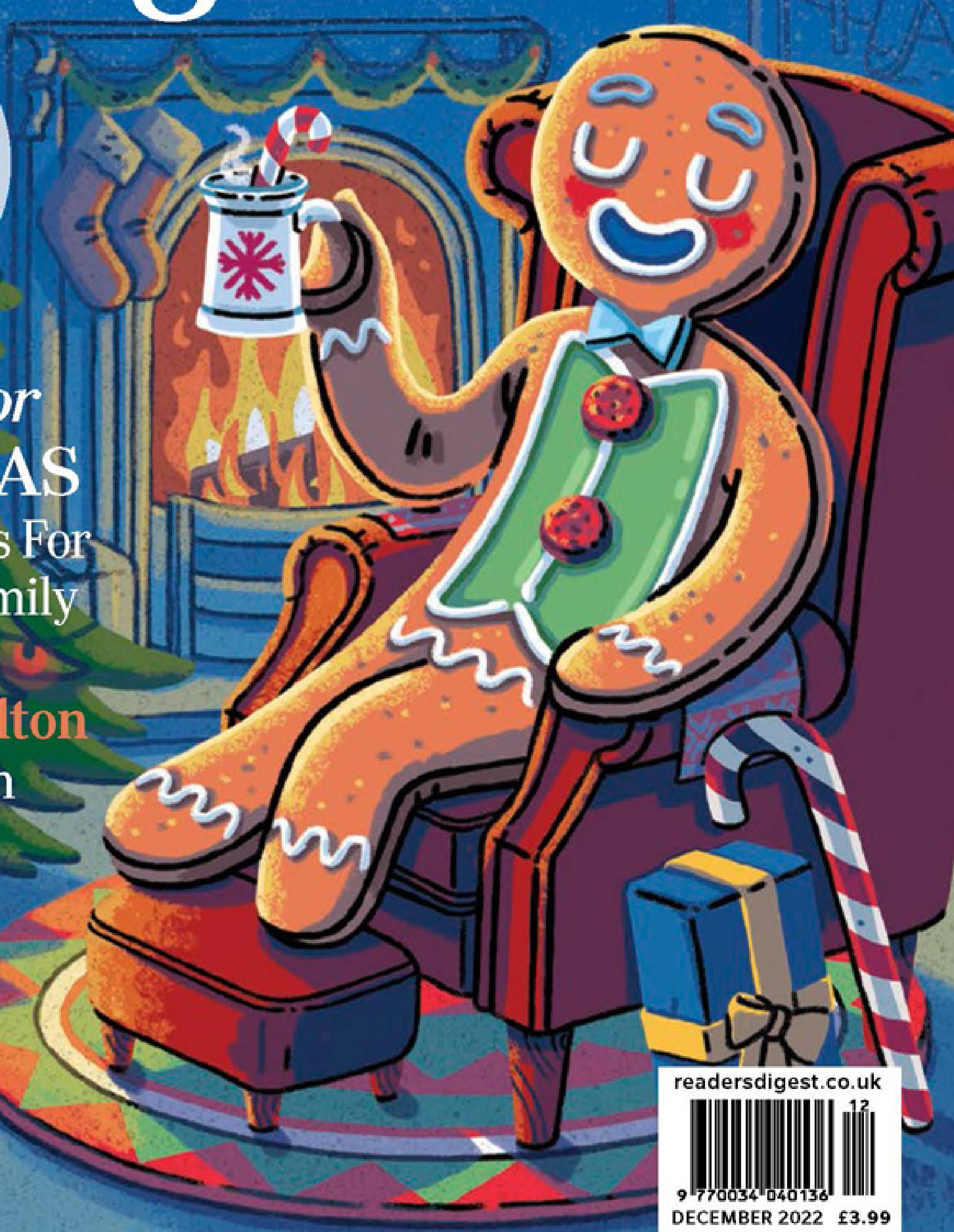
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THE MURDER THAT CHANGED BRITAIN

UNMISSABLE SPECIAL PREMIERING ON **CBS REALITY** 15TH NOVEMBER

There's only one place true crime enthusiasts should look – CBS Reality. Home to expert-led true crime, the channel investigates authentic criminal cases through first-hand interviews, archive footage and key evidence.

Watching experts dissect a crime and piece together the jigsaw is fascinating and makes us feel safer too. But there are rare times when mistakes are made, sometimes with devastating consequences.

This is the focus of CBS Reality's unmissable one-off special *The Murder That Changed Britain*. Premiering on 15th November at 10pm, the special features a crime that changed Britain – the murder of Rachel Nickell.

In July 1992, Nickell, a 23-year-old mother of one, was stabbed to death on Wimbledon Common in broad daylight.

One of the highest-profile cases in recent times, the frantic investigation led to one of the most notorious miscarriages of justice in British criminal history.

With no hard evidence, investigators brought in leading forensic psychologist, Paul Britton. His criminal profile of the killer convinced police a man called Colin Stagg was the murderer.

In August 1993 Stagg was arrested and charged, spending a year in custody before the case was thrown out at the Old Bailey. The real killer, Robert Napper, remained at large and went on to kill again.

Ever since, the blame for the investigation's catastrophic failings has been placed at the feet of the man the Met brought in to crack the case: Professor Paul Britton.

Britton has never spoken publicly on the case – until now. On CBS Reality's *The Murder That Changed Britain*, in an exclusive, in-depth interview, Britton reveals the exact nature of his involvement in 'Operation Edzell'.

Also interviewed for the first time is retired Met Police Commander Gary Copson. He takes us through the story of how the sting operation came apart at the seams.

And most dramatically, *The Murder That Changed Britain* has secured one of the most anticipated meetings in recent years. Colin Stagg comes face-to-face with Paul Britton. Will he accept Britton's side of the story and get the closure he's wanted for nearly 30 years? Or will he continue to see Professor Britton as the man who ruined his life?

Watch CBS Reality at 10pm on Tuesday 15th November to find out. ■

YOU CAN FIND CBS REALITY ON FREEVIEW (67), SKY (146), VIRGIN (148) AND FREESAT (135)

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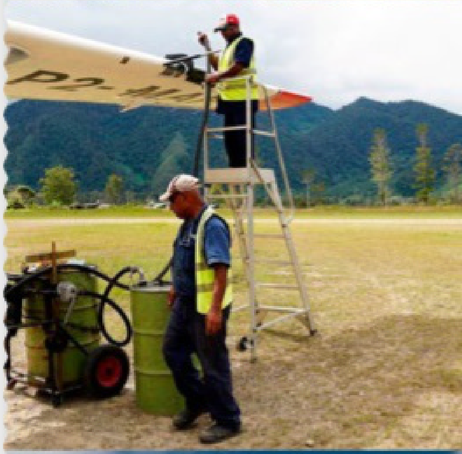
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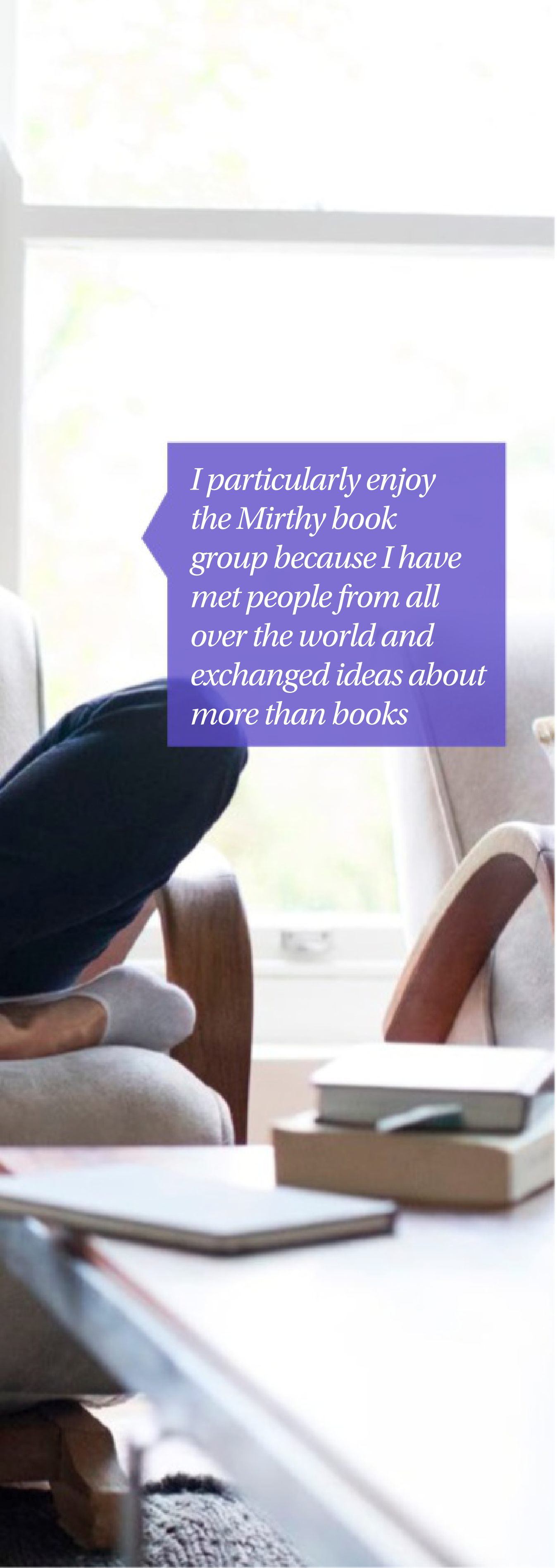
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In This Issue...



Welcome to a very special Christmas edition of *Reader's Digest*—it's the issue I look forward to the most each year. Filled with heartwarming real-life tales, mouth-watering recipes, and nourishing tips and recommendations, ranging from health to Yuletide reads, it never fails to put me in a festive mood.

This month's issue is no different, offering a look at inspiring stories of kindness at Christmas on p75, a vintage guide to sumptuous baking recipes on p124, and a wonderfully wintry feature on Greenland's wildlife—among many others.

And have you noticed that the magazine feels a bit thicker? We hope you'll enjoy the extra pages brimming with festive competitions and great prizes to make your Christmas just that little bit more special.

Eva



After eight years and 97 issues, this will be my final edition of *Reader's Digest*. It's been an honour and a pleasure being your editor, and there have been more highlights than I can count. Interviewing Rupert Everett in Rome. Speaking with my heroes Louis Theroux, Sigourney Weaver and Chris Stein. Working with the late Queen Elizabeth II to celebrate our centenary. And of course, hearing from you, our cherished readers, on all the stories that have resonated with you. Thank you for being such an engaged and collaborative readership—I think we created something very special together. I leave you in Eva's capable hands, and look forward to transitioning from editor to reader. Want to keep in touch? You can follow me on Twitter, @annalouwalker.

Anna

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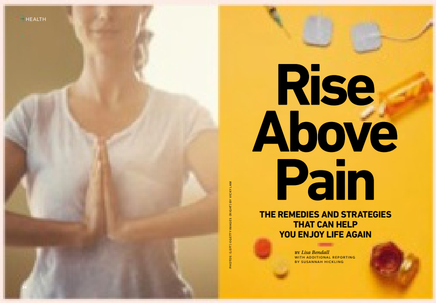
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Over To You

LETTERS ON THE *October* ISSUE

We pay £50 for Letter of the Month and £30 for all others

LETTER OF THE MONTH



What an interesting and helpful feature "Rise Above Pain" was, listing the remedies and strategies that can help people in pain enjoy life again.

I've been living with chronic pain for more than a decade. After a fall from a bike, I had to have surgery. Since then I've had a constant headache, back and hip pain, tingling in my hands and feet, muscle soreness and random pain too. After many doctor's visits and tests, I had a variety of diagnoses and was told I was suffering from depression too. It wasn't a shock. I've had a hard time adjusting to all the different pains and sometimes let my symptoms control my life.

I felt a ray of hope when I read this article. I'm taking lots of your suggestions on board. And some have helped already. Prior to reading this article, I never knew what each day would bring, there were more bad days than good, but now it's the other way round.

Having an open mind and trying new remedies is highly recommended. Some might work, some might not, but the important thing is to never give up.

PAUL LLOYD, *Scotland*

KITTY LOVE

Like Olly Mann, I was brought up with cats. His description of their psychopathy and lack of humour put a knowing smile on my face. I have a couple of gingers with my wife Bec, the youngest of whom, Captain, is just six months. He delights in springing up to catch flies and play with them before he loudly crunches them down. With cats, there's no begging to be your mate and no self-censoring of their behaviour. To me, there's something endearing about this total lack of effort to be liked as it makes the occasions when they come meowing up to me make my heart sing that they've chosen me.

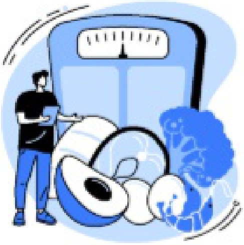
LISA BEST, *Cheshire*

A CONTROVERSIAL COLUMN

I can't be alone among your readers in being shocked by Dr Max's piece "Leading By Example."

He's right, of course, that excess weight is a major factor in many forms of ill health. I wonder, though, at the level of disgust and vitriol he displays towards hard-working and often stressed nurses enjoying their much-needed break.

As a doctor, he should perhaps know better than to be so triggered by people's outward appearances, and to consider instead opening a conversation with some of these nurses.



He might ask them what their working day or night is like, what they do to cope with the pressures of their job, how much money they have left for food when all the bills are paid and what facilities there are to access good, nutritious, inexpensive food at work.

He might just gain a little insight into the reality of nursing at the front line. And maybe find some empathy in his heart.

PAT METCALFE, *via email*



WHALE-Y INSPIRING

I was fascinated by "Swimming With Orcas". I am a diver myself and was envious of the extraordinary encounter the writer had in Norway. When you hear the words "killer whale", you immediately have the image of a vicious hunter in your head, fearsome and unscrupulous—however, these animals are definitely not what many people think.

I have swum with many marine life, including hammerhead sharks in Costa Rica, over the years. It's amazing to be a part of their world for a few hours—a serene, slow-motion world, silent, eerie, mysterious.

On a sadder note, it is time theme parks stopped imprisoning orcas for entertainment. Orcas don't do well in captivity.

VANYA HAMMETT, *Cheshire*

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MAXXIS



...DIFFERENTLY

The GP VTT St-Sylvestre is not so much about being fast as about having fun on the ski slopes—but on a mountain bike! For more than 30 years, this unusual Grand Prix has taken place on New Year's Eve in Villars-sur-Ollon, Switzerland. Five kilometres and 850 metres of elevation lie between the start on the Roc d'Orsay and the finish line in the centre of this resort town. Helmets are mandatory for riders—costumes are welcome.

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ILLUSTRATION BY *Dom McKenzie*

God Bless Us, Every One!

Olly Mann waxes lyrical about the ultimate festive musical (or should we say carol?)



Olly Mann presents *Four Thought* for BBC Radio 4, and the podcasts *The Modern Mann*, *The Week Unwrapped* and *The Retrospectors*

WHEN DOES CHRISTMAS begin in your household? The day you get the decorations down from the attic? The first afternoon you mull some wine? The morning you first tackle a chocolate orange for breakfast?

For me, it's the evening we watch *The Muppet Christmas Carol*, Disney's enduring 1992 retelling of the Dickens story, with added Americanisms and fur. For many years, this involved fetching a dusty VHS from the back of the cupboard, and would occur sometime in early December. Since the advent of Disney+, however—with the Muppets available on-demand 24/7, just one tap along from the Kardashians (insert your own gag here)—our annual home screening has been pulled ever earlier into autumn. This year, it was October 25. I was in a T-shirt. There were still leaves on the trees. The Halloween pumpkin had yet to be carved. But we just couldn't wait. I caved.

My two kids have been hot-housed in the Muppet oeuvre from birth; if only because, when Grandma comes to babysit, *The Muppet Show* is the one cross-generational entertainment on which we can agree: slapstick for the kiddies, warm nostalgia for me, and Seventies guest stars Mum can readily identify (Charles Aznavour, Zero Mostel, Bernadette Peters... even their names feel retro). The tactility of the puppets is appealing too; the ping-pong eyes and the sticks under their arms being so much more relatable than their modern-day CGI equivalents. You can imagine exactly what Fozzie Bear feels like.

But *The Muppet Christmas Carol* is a triumph far beyond demographic box-ticking. This year it turns 30, a respectable age for a film to be taken seriously; but, to me, it's forever felt comfortably on par with *It's A Wonderful Life* and *Miracle on 34th Street* as a solid-gold Christmas classic. It's postmodern, yet timeless. It has the same profundity and morality as the original book, yet finds space for singing vegetables and a cameo from the Swedish Chef. It is, dare I say, the most redolent version of Dickens' tale committed to film.

What makes it work? In two words, Michael Caine. His portrayal of Scrooge is convincing, committed and completely irony-free. When he took the role, he reportedly told director Brian Henson, "I'm going to play it like I'm playing opposite the Royal Shakespeare Company," and his performance meets those ambitions. In just a few seconds his face cycles from joy, to apprehension, to dejection, to fear. He never once nods and winks to the audience; never betrays any awareness that his co-narrator is a rat from New Jersey, or that Dr Teeth and the Electric Mayhem band don't really belong in Victorian London. You utterly believe that he has been on a gut-wrenching journey to confront his own mortality. That he has looked death in the face and anticipated an eternity of endless suffering. And then, minutes later, that he is dancing down the street with a cow.

IT HAS THE SAME PROFUNDITY AND MORALITY AS THE ORIGINAL BOOK, YET FINDS SPACE FOR SINGING VEGETABLES

The Muppets slot easily into a world of festive fun: the very cloth that forms Kermit's physiology is the colour-palette of Christmas. But there was pain behind the scenes on this project, and I think it shows. Henson's Dad, Jim, had

died suddenly two years prior, at the age of 53. As if this wasn't stressful enough, Disney then threatened to pull out of the deal to buy Henson's company, arguing that without its most senior creative force—the voice of Kermit himself—the enterprise was worth less. Then, just a year later, long-time Muppeteer, Richard Hunt died of complications related to HIV/AIDS. Not the obvious circumstances for a feelgood film.

Composer Paul Williams, meanwhile, was emerging from rehab after a decade of alcohol and cocaine abuse and, tasked with writing songs about spiritual awakening and redemption, gave tracks like "Thankful Heart" and "It Feels Like Christmas" an emotional punch way beyond their role in the plot. Like Caine's performance, they are unshakeably sincere. The orchestrations are lush. The choruses are subtle and reward repeat listening (that said, I suspect the *Les Mis*-esque ballad "When Love Is Gone" *is* quite boring for little kids, and applaud Jeffrey Katzenberg's decision to cut it from the theatrical release. From December 11, it will once again be restored to the film on Disney+, which at least provides me with an excuse for a repeat viewing, to test my theory).

Apparently, an original version of the screenplay had the Ghost of Christmas Future played by Gonzo, his distinctive blue nose sticking out from under the Reaper's hood. This would certainly have lightened the mood, and perhaps enticed my kids out from behind the sofa, but it would have added a pantomime quality that is gloriously absent from the final film. Instead, because all three of the spirits are represented by puppets with whom the audience are unfamiliar, and who do not appear elsewhere in the Muppet canon, it makes the scenes more urgent, and Scrooge's crisis more acute.

The film makes no mention of the Nativity, yet stays true to the Christmas message of family, love and kindness—something meaningful for every viewer. With added Miss Piggy. What's not to like? ■

Painters of the Past

Artists used to store paint in animal bladders fashioned into purses, before metal paint tubes were invented in the 1830s

Paints for illuminated manuscripts were made from crushed precious stones, like lapis lazuli

source: vam.ac.uk, ceu.edu

Timothy Dalton
On The Queen, Questionable Roles, And Quickstep

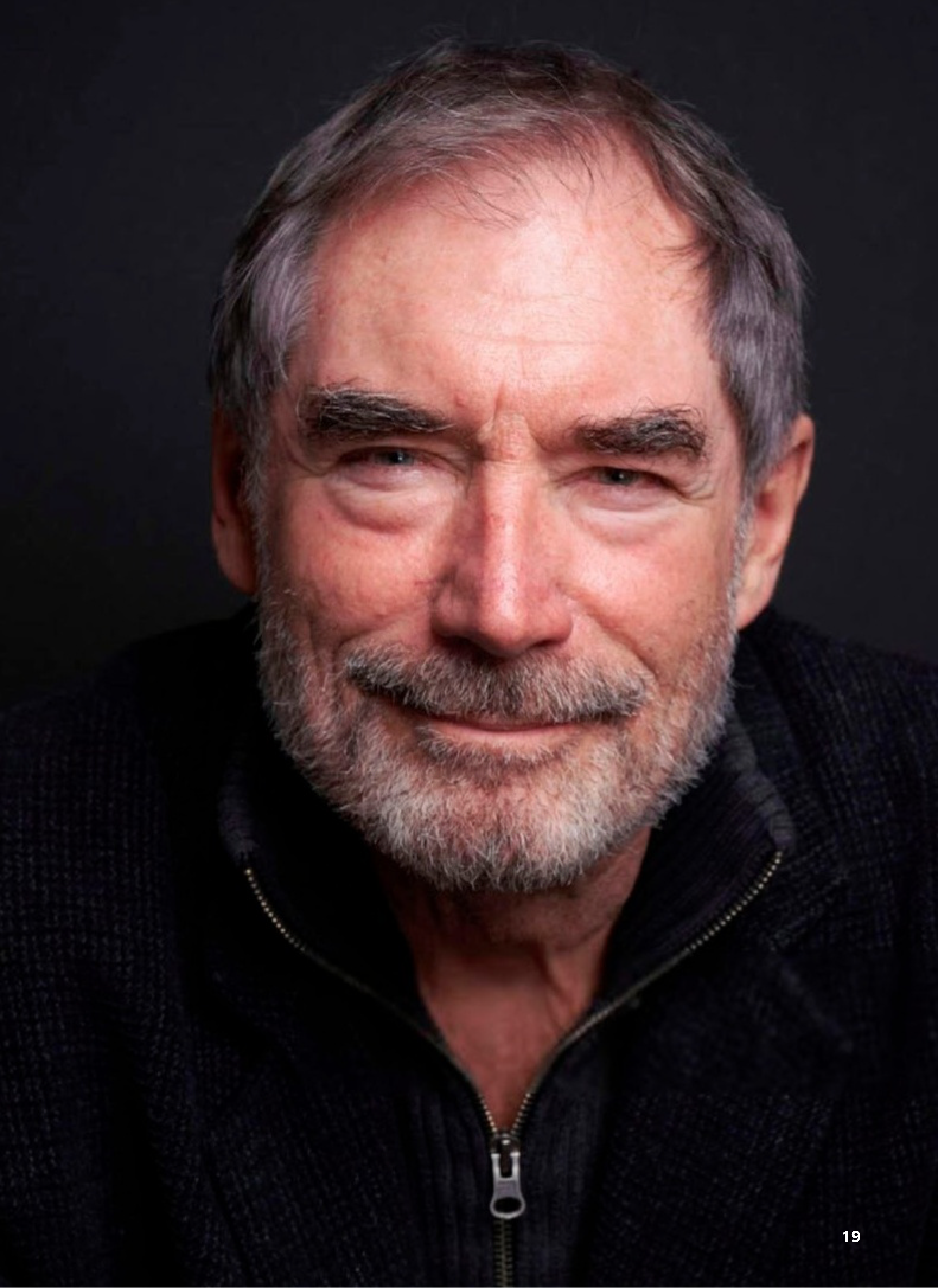
Simon Button chats to the cinema titan about starring in the fifth series of *The Crown* and more

When he was asked to join the new series of *The Crown,* Timothy Dalton didn't hesitate to say yes, not least because the invitation came from none other than Lesley Manville. "I got a message from her saying she was playing Princess Margaret, would I come and play Peter Townsend?" Dalton relates. "I thought that was such a wonderful thing for her to do so of course I said yes. I also think it's terrific television, beautifully made the way we used to make TV 20 years ago."

Townsend, played in the first series by Ben Miles, was the former RAF Group Captain and equerry to King George VI and Queen Elizabeth II. He had an affair with the latter's younger sister until she ended it in 1955. In the show, their paths cross again many years later but under tragic circumstances.

Did Dalton already know his co-star? The actor, who turns out to be much funnier than most of his screen roles suggest, laughs. "Well, I do now. I've danced the quickstep with her." Referencing a scene in the fourth episode of the fifth series of *The Crown*, Dalton adds: "Well, I think it was a quickstep, not a foxtrot. I'm your man for a waltz and I've even danced the tango with Jennifer Connelly in *The Rocketeer*, without music I have to say."

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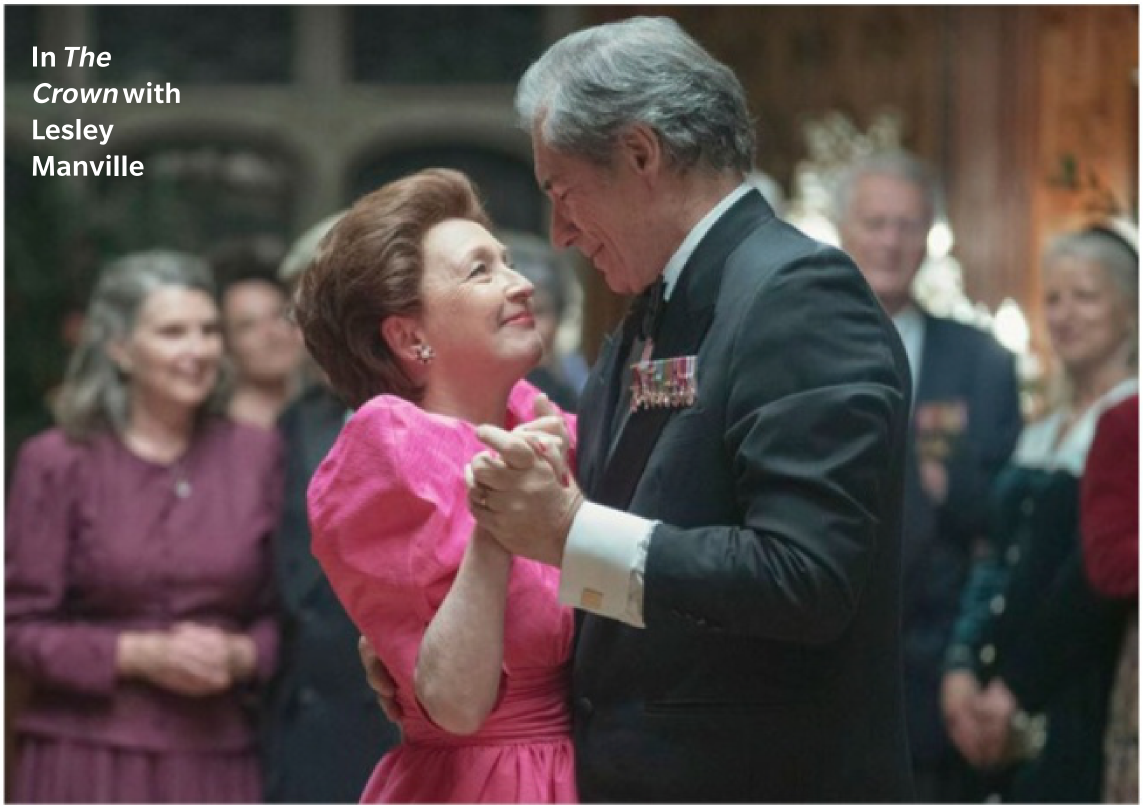


Dalton in *The Lion In Winter*



In *Mary, Queen of Scots* with Vanessa Redgrave

PHOTO 12 / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO / UNITED ARCHIVES GMBH / ALAMY STOCK


In *The Crown* with Lesley Manville

He laughs again. "But this one was all changing beats and rhythms and the rest of it. It's not something I was confident about and had Lesley known how unconfident I was, as she was hurtling through the air with her feet off the ground, she wouldn't have done it. I struggled but it was wonderful and by the end of it you know these two people are in love."

Does this mean we might be seeing Timothy on *Strictly* sometime in the future? His answer is an emphatic: "No. N-o."

Since his film debut in 1968 in *The Lion in Winter*, the Welsh-born/Manchester-raised Dalton has never courted the limelight. He's just got on with the job. Despite high-profile relationships with Vanessa Redgrave, Whoopi Goldberg and musician Oksana Grigorieva (with whom he has a son, Alexander), he's always been under the celebrity radar and splits his time between Los Angeles and Chiswick, his British accent still intact.

We're talking via WhatsApp and the 76-year-old actor is on lively form. He doesn't mince his words; when I ask what he most liked about the character of Peter Townsend, he answers: "You don't have to like a character to play them. I'm doing something at the moment [for *Yellowstone* creator Taylor Sheridan]



ALBUM / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

where it looks like I'm going to play a rather nasty character. But Peter was an extraordinary man in many ways. He was a fighter pilot in the Second World War, when there was a chance they were going to die every time they took off. He didn't have much choice but nevertheless he was very brave."

Dalton's father served in the Special Operations Executive during the Second World War and when he was 17, Timothy himself won an RAF flying scholarship. "It was a dream of mine," he recalls, "until I realised my job would be to kill people and that there would be a lot of people looking to kill me."

Instead, he turned to acting. As a youngster he was hooked on Saturday morning kids' shows at the local cinema in Cheadle, near Manchester, where he grew up. "Then I was old enough to go see real films and I saw this world beyond suburban Manchester—a magical land of foreign places and different lives. I wanted to be part of that.

"Dad was pleased with my eventual choice of career because his father had been a theatrical impresario with a chain of theatres around Britain. Mum never said what she'd have preferred me to do, but like most mothers she wouldn't have wanted her son to go into such an uncertain profession."





Playing the exiled Prince Barin in *Flash Gordon*,

(Right) Performing with Mae West in *Sextette*

"THE RAF WAS A DREAM OF MINE UNTIL I REALISED MY JOB WOULD BE TO KILL PEOPLE"

After studying at RADA and touring with the National Youth Theatre, Timothy worked for Birmingham Repertory Theatre, then starred as Philip II, the King of France, opposite Peter O'Toole and Katharine Hepburn in *The Lion in Winter*. "O'Toole was in awe of her and I think quite scared," he remembers, "but I wasn't because when you're young you're not scared of anyone. You just get stuck in with enthusiasm."

Ten years later he worked with another screen legend, a then 84-year-old Mae West in the box office bomb *Sextette*. "She was great fun. We'd all go out to dinner and she'd regale us with stories about New York in the 1800s. It was a terrible film but a good experience."

It didn't hamper Dalton's career. He did *Flash Gordon* on the big screen and lots of TV work before signing on to play 007 as Roger Moore's successor in 1987's *The Living Daylights*. He'd said no previously, feeling himself too young and fearful of following in Sean

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The Living Daylights, with Maryam d'Abo

COLLECTION CHRISTOPHEL / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

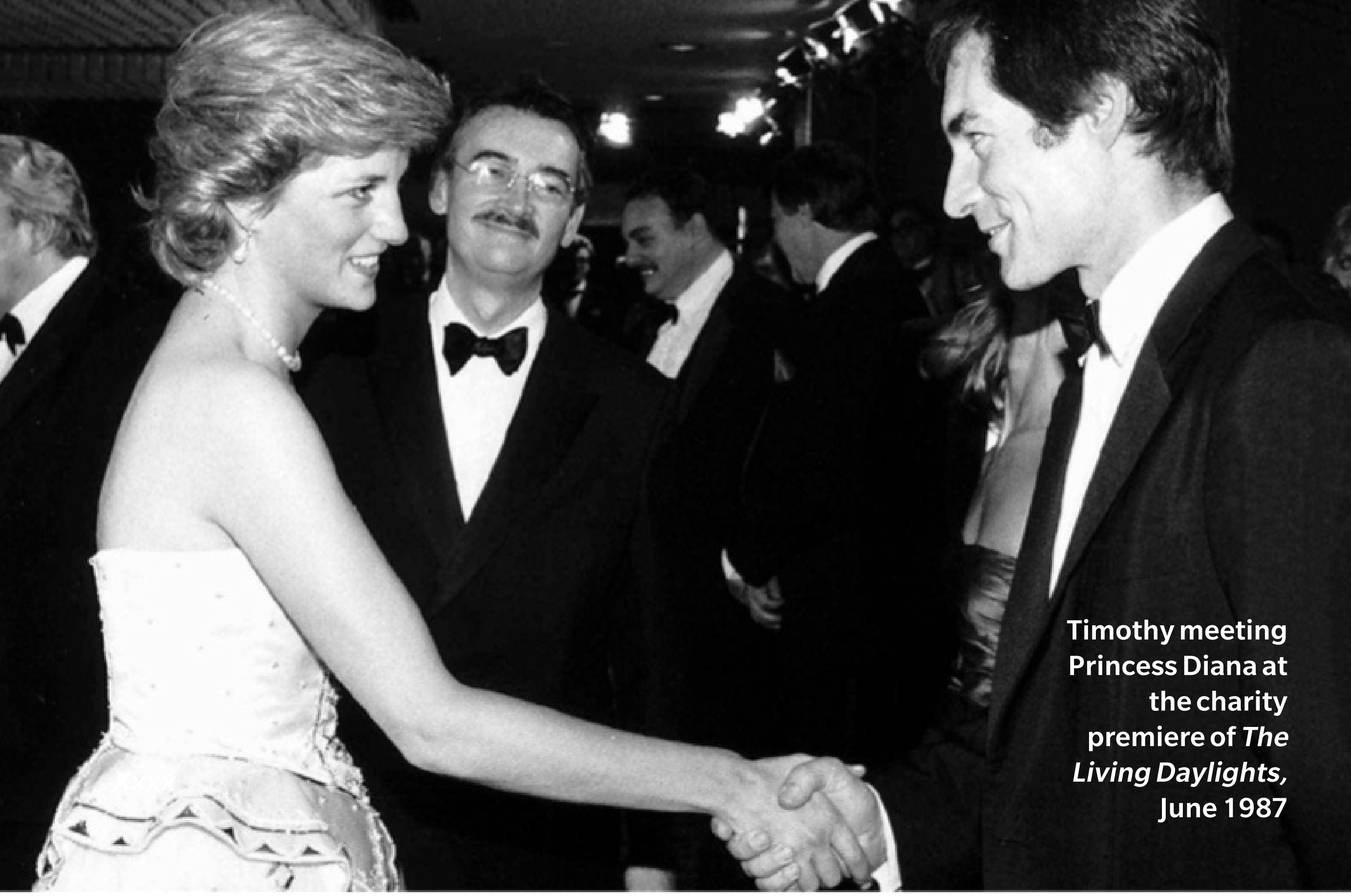
"WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG, YOU'RE NOT SCARED OF ANYONE—YOU'RE JUST FULL OF ENTHUSIASM"

Connery's footsteps, but was lured by the promise of playing a meaner and moodier Bond.

He wasn't altogether happy with the results. "Interestingly enough, we were trying to do what the Bond films have since become. They wanted it to be tougher, more real and move away from the silliness, but when it came down to actually doing it they didn't want to take the risk of it not working."

The Living Daylights and his second and final 007 film *Licence to Kill* were, he felt, "a bit of a mishmash, but I think what they did with the Daniel Craig ones was a terrific step." As for who he thinks should play Bond next, his answer is amused but evasive: "I'm staying out of that debate. It's not my business and it would create far more trouble than it's worth."

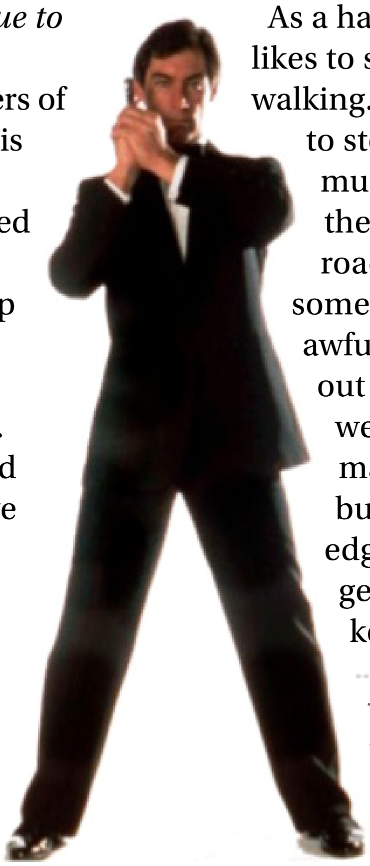
There are jobs where he's thought, *I made a mistake saying yes to this*—not that he'll name them, but that certainly wasn't the case with *The Crown*. His and Manville's paths had only briefly crossed before. "At a party or a do or something, then I got that message asking me to come and work with her and I thought,



Timothy meeting Princess Diana at the charity premiere of *The Living Daylights,* June 1987

Isn't it lovely for a colleague to ask that?"

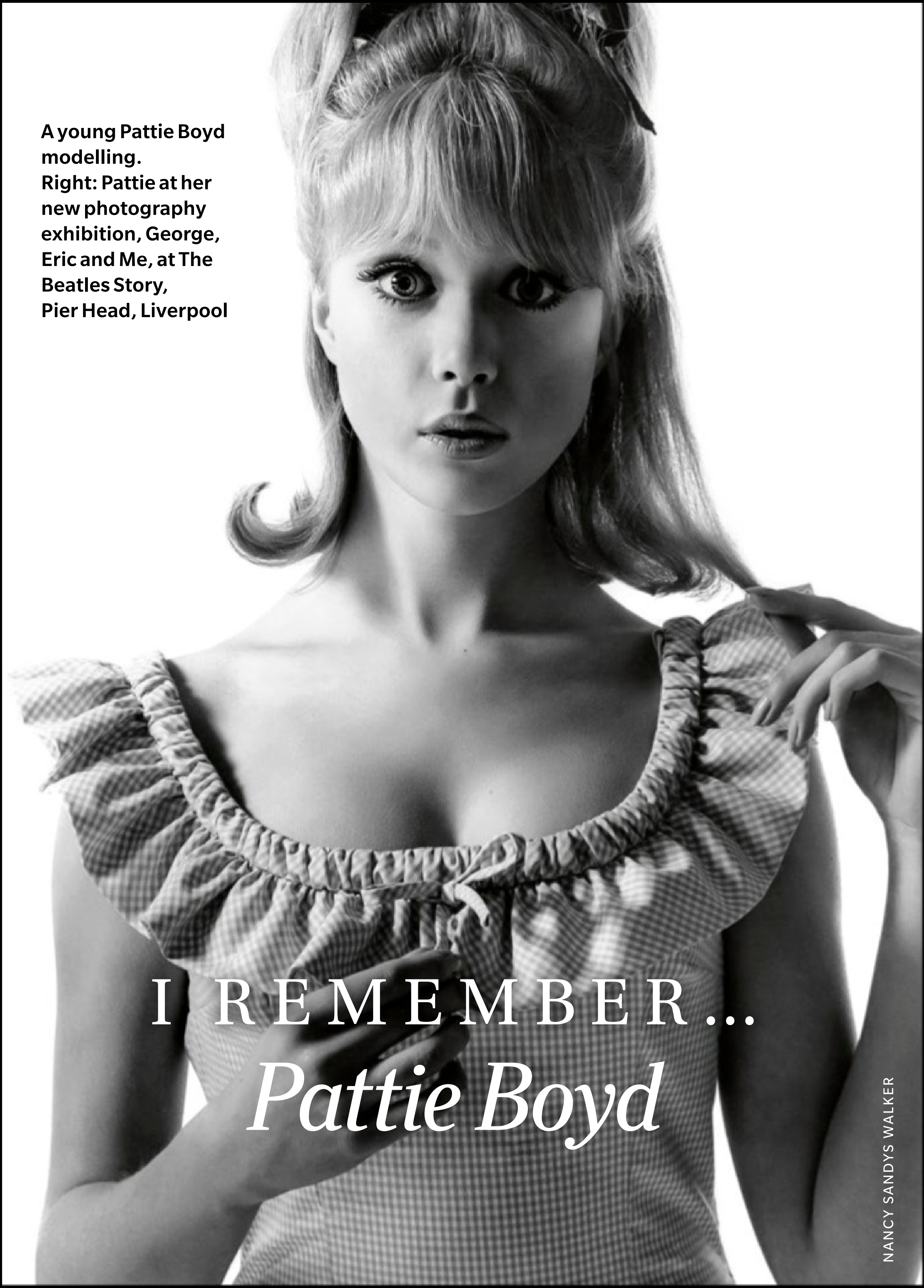
He's met several members of The Royal Family during his career, including Charles and Diana when they visited *The Living Daylights* set and The Queen at a line-up for a Bond premiere. He was deeply moved by Her Majesty's passing this year. "In my mind I remembered the black and white footage of her coronation, of this terribly young woman having a crown put on her head. She didn't expect it and was thrust into it, but she did the job marvellously well."



As a hard worker himself, Dalton likes to spend his downtime walking. "Although I might have to stop because it hurts too much," he chuckles. "In the States I do love doing road trips. This country has some great qualities and some awful ones, but when you get out into the mountainous west the landscapes are magnificent. I like driving but walking is a double-edged sword." He sighs. "I'm getting old but you've got to keep fit." ■

The Crown Season 5 is available to watch now on Netflix

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A young Pattie Boyd modelling.
Right: Pattie at her new photography exhibition, George, Eric and Me, at The Beatles Story, Pier Head, Liverpool

I REMEMBER…
Pattie Boyd

NANCY SANDYS WALKER

Pattie Boyd (78) came to fame as a top model in the 1960s, when she also became the wife of George Harrison. She looks back at her childhood in Kenya, hanging out with Jean Shrimpton and The Beatles, and being a muse for Eric Clapton



WENN RIGHTS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

MY EARLIEST MEMORY IS OF SITTING IN A HIGH CHAIR when I was nearly three and my mother feeding me spinach. It was so disgusting that I remember spitting it out. My mother was in the ATS [Auxiliary Territorial Service] during the Second World War, met my father at a dance and married very early at age 18. We moved around a lot when I was young—from Somerset to Scotland for some reason, then Guildford for another reason. But it seemed normal because I didn't know any different.

MY FATHER WAS A BOMBER PILOT DURING THE WAR, and he was badly injured when the plane he was flying crashed into another plane during take-off in Malta. He suffered severe burns on his hands and his face, and he later had to have plastic surgery at the famous McIndoe Centre in East Grinstead.

WHEN I WAS FOUR WE MOVED TO KENYA AND I LOVED IT THERE. It always seemed to be sunny and we all stayed with my grandparents, who had a glorious house in Lang'ata and who were wealthy, so there were servants and nannies to look after us. The house had beautiful gardens that flowed into the wilderness where wild animals would sometimes get lost and come up to the house.

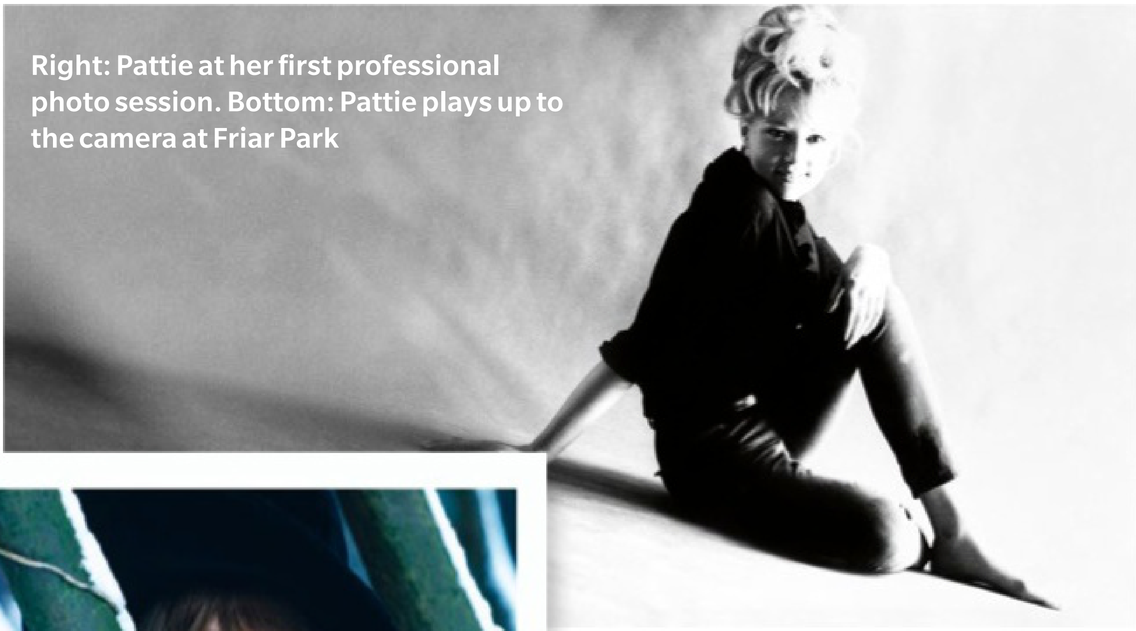


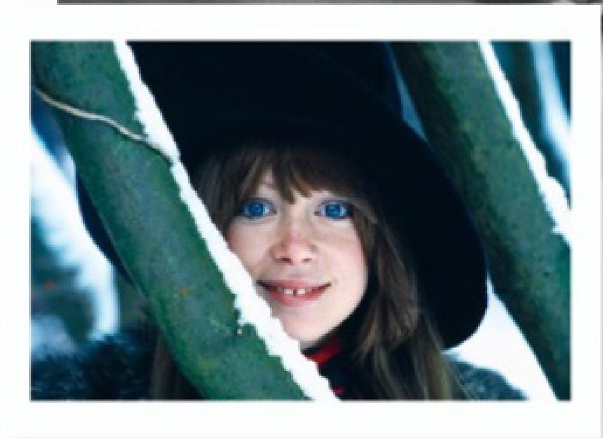
PATTIE BOYD ARCHIVE

MY PARENTS DIVORCED WHEN I WAS AT BOARDING SCHOOL IN NAIROBI but I only learned about it at half-term when I was taken to a new house that my mother had moved into. She said to me, "Darling, I'd like you to meet your new father." I shook this man's hand and I felt terribly guilty because I thought, *What on earth is Daddy going to think about this?*

Myself and my siblings eventually moved back to England with her and her new family but it was never explained exactly what had happened.

AFTER SCHOOL I GOT A JOB AT ELIZABETH ARDEN in Bond Street,





Right: Pattie at her first professional photo session. Bottom: Pattie plays up to the camera at Friar Park

PATTIE BOYD ARCHIVE

London, because I wasn't qualified to do anything and my mum knew the CEO there. I shampooed people's hair and took their coats. I was a general dogsbody, but I must say it was terribly glamorous because it was where I first saw fabulous magazines like *Vogue*, *Tatler* and *Harper's Bazaar*. A client who worked for *Honey* magazine asked me if I'd ever thought of becoming a model. She arranged for me to get some test shots done and that led to me signing with an agency.

SEEING MYSELF IN MAGAZINES WAS SO EXCITING. I couldn't wait to show my mother and she was totally amazed, saying: "How on earth did you do that?" She had no idea that I'd been tramping the streets trying to get jobs and hopping on buses and trains to persuade photographers to take pictures of me so that I'd have a nice portfolio.

I went on to do lots of lovely shoots, although I never enjoyed posing for Freemans' catalogues. They'd book you for three or four days in a row, which meant lots of money but the clothes were hideous and far too big, so they had to have dog clips at the back.

JEAN SHRIMPTON WAS MY HERO and the man who was to become my boyfriend as my career took off in the early 1960s, the photographer Eric Swain, was friends with David Bailey and Jean, so I eventually got to meet


George Harrison and Pattie in a rose garden

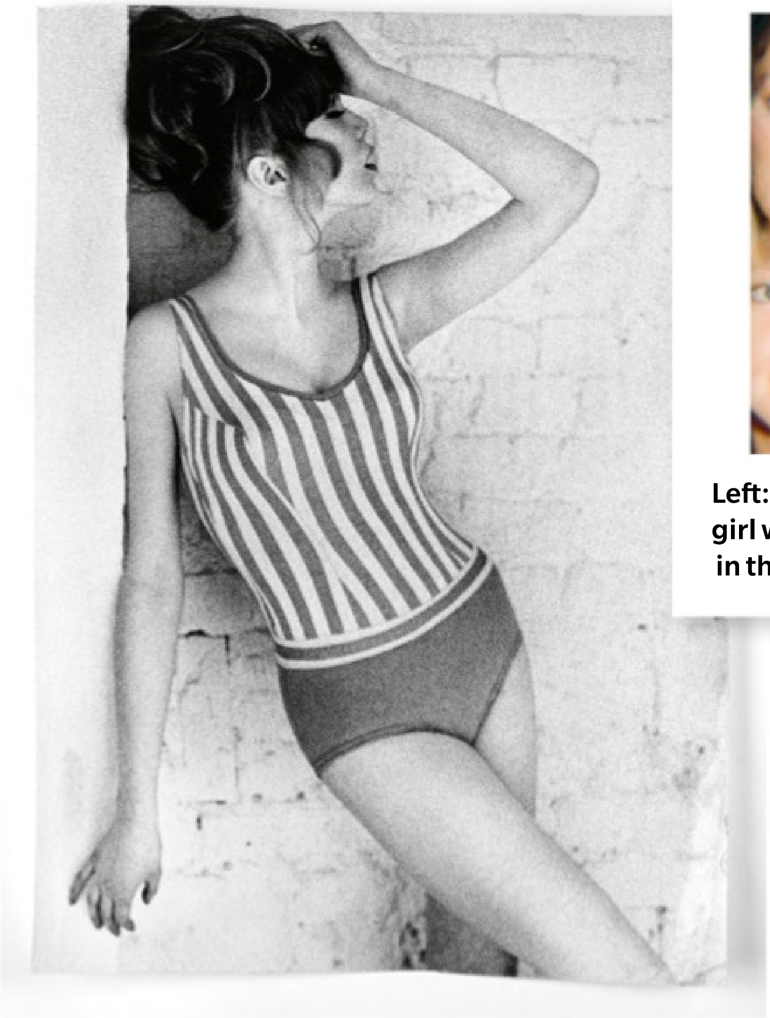
PATTIE BOYD ARCHIVE

her. We'd hang out together occasionally and she was glorious and so beautiful. I was in awe of her really, but she was very down-to-earth.

IT'S MOST ODD HOW I ENDED UP IN *A HARD DAY'S NIGHT*. I was sent to an audition where I recognised the director Richard Lester, whom I'd done some TV commercials with, so I went away thinking, *That was for a crisps commercial, maybe*. When I got home, my agent rang and said "You've got a part in the Beatles film." I panicked and said I didn't want to be an actress because I was far too shy, but it turned out I only had one line, namely "Prisoners."

WHEN I FIRST MET GEORGE HARRISON, I THOUGHT HE WAS VERY HANDSOME. His eyes were a stunning velvety-brown and he was rather shy, like me. I found him very gentle. During filming, we spent many hours on a train and he asked me out. I told him I was seeing my boyfriend that evening. His face dropped and I thought, *He's from Liverpool and he doesn't know many people in London*, so I invited him to join us. He declined but of course we subsequently began dating.

BEING WITH GEORGE WAS WONDERFUL because we were hanging out with the rest of The





Left: An early test shoot. Right: A girl with kaleidoscope eyes (cameo in the 1966 film, Kaleidoscope)

PATTIE BOYD ARCHIVE

Beatles and we met all sorts of interesting people in the music business and we went to lots of clubs and restaurants. One of the most memorable times was when we went along to a recording studio in Hollywood. We were taken up to the control room to meet Frank Sinatra, then watched him go into this enormous studio with a full orchestra. He stood in the middle, sang "My Way" in one take, then said "That's it, we're going for a drink."

FOR OUR HONEYMOON WE FLEW TO BARBADOS, which in the 1960s was still rather wild and untouched and it looked quite poverty-stricken. But it was the most beautiful island and the sea was delicious. Brian Epstein had rented a house for us and one day from the garden we saw Her Majesty The Queen and Prince Philip going along the road in an open-top car. The street was lined with kids with little Union Jacks waving at her. It was lovely to see.

BEING IN INDIA WAS A MAGICAL TIME. We were there in 1968 to learn more about meditation with the


Profile shot and full size portrait from Pattie's modelling comp card



Maharishi. All The Beatles were together and they were happy, serene and calm. What was lovely was when we took time off from meditation, which we could whenever we liked, they started writing songs, most of which ended up on *The White Album*.

Those were happy times, although my modelling career suffered when I was with George. It was alright if I was working when he was on tour or in the studio, but if I was working and he was doing nothing he found it irritating.

I FOUND ERIC CLAPTON TO BE VERY SEXY and it was when he and George began making music together in the late 1960s that I became aware of his infatuation with me. We'd known each other off and on for years, because musicians like to hang out with each other, but I did find him pursuing me in the way that he did quite difficult at the time. But when I first heard "Layla", which was inspired by me, I was

PATTIE BOYD ARCHIVE

really touched by it, because it was such an emotional song. Things were on the wane between me and George and I could no longer resist.

IT WAS INCREDIBLY EXCITING BEING ON TOUR WITH ERIC. I was lucky enough to be at the side of the stage so I could see the band play, photograph them all and also see the audience—which especially in the summertime would stretch back as far as the eye could see. But later his drinking started to get out of control, plus he'd had a baby with some stranger—or rather someone who was a stranger to me.

WHEN I WAS STILL MARRIED TO ERIC, I WENT ON HOLIDAY with a friend to Sri Lanka, which is where I ended up meeting Rod [Weston, a property developer]. We were at the same party and I found him very charming and handsome.

We kept in touch and later got together, and finally in 2005 we were married at Chelsea Registry Office. We decided our puppy Freddie should be the best man and as we were only allowed a few people in there we had a reception at the Beaumont Hotel afterwards.

I FIRST BEGAN TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE SIXTIES and I went everywhere with my Pentax camera. In 2005 I put on my first exhibition [of pictures of Harrison and Clapton] in San Francisco and I was as nervous as hell. I was very insecure and I thought that I would be condemned for showing photos of my ex husbands. It was a surprise when it was so nicely received.

Some of the pictures are in my new book, along with ones of my life and career. It's a nice balance. ■



Pattie Boyd and Rod Weston at RHS Hampton Court

MAUREEN MCLEAN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

As told to Simon Button

Pattie Boyd: My Life In Pictures is published by Real Art Press and is available now

NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY

SOMETIMES THE BEST CURE IS AVAILABLE RIGHT IN YOUR OWN HOME

BY *Lisa Bendall*

PHOTO BY *Justin Poulsen*



FOR DRY, ITCHY SKIN: TAKE AN OATMEAL BATH



Several studies show the benefits of this traditional breakfast grain for treating skin symptoms. One 2020 trial, for instance, found that patients with eczema showed more improvement when their hand creams contained colloidal oatmeal (colloidal means the grains are pulverised into dust and mixed thoroughly into the lotion or solution).

"Oatmeal has anti-itch, anti-inflammatory, soothing properties, and it improves the skin's direct barrier," says Dr Sandy Skotnicki, a dermatologist in the department of medicine at the University of Toronto, Canada. This is thanks to the grain's natural antioxidants, proteins and other special compounds. The starch and fibre in oatmeal also help draw moisture to the skin.

You can make your own colloidal oatmeal by breaking down rolled oats with a coffee grinder or blender. Tie one cup of the oats into a sachet bag and immerse it in lukewarm bathwater. Just be careful getting in—the bath might get a bit slippery. And don't oversoak your skin, as this can cause irritation.

"The data has shown that a quick bath of less than ten minutes every day can be helpful, followed by application of a moisturiser that helps repair the skin barrier," says Dr Skotnicki, adding that it's best to look for a product that says it treats eczema, even if that's not what you have. "Not all moisturisers are created equal. Those are the best, in part because they're formulated without allergens."

FOR JOINT PAIN: GO ON A BRISK WALK



With painful arthritis in your knees, you may be tempted to take it easy. Instead, set a goal of spending an hour a week—that's just nine minutes a day—walking as briskly as if you're trying to catch a train or you're late for a meeting.

People who pick up their speed for that hour are 85 per cent less likely to end up with mobility problems from their arthritis, according to 2019

IN ADDITION TO BEING A LAXATIVE, EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL HAS HEART-HEALTH BENEFITS

PHOTOS BY JUSTIN POULSEN

SLEEPING ON YOUR LEFT SIDE CAN HELP REDUCE THE SEVERITY OF YOUR HEARTBURN

findings by researchers at Northwestern University in Chicago.

It's unlikely that the physical stress of brisk walking will cause more wear and tear on your knees. Bioengineers at Queen Mary University, London, showed that this kind of mechanical pressure on the joints in fact triggers a protective effect in cartilage cells that wards off inflammation and damage.

FOR CONSTIPATION: DRINK SOME OLIVE OIL



When you're feeling stopped up, a daily spoonful of extra-virgin olive oil can help to move things along. That's been shown in experiments such as one on patients with ulcerative colitis, published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* in 2020.

Not only did participants have fewer symptoms of constipation when taking extra-virgin olive oil (as opposed to canola oil, which was used for comparison), but their blood tests showed that their condition became less active.

"It's thought that extra-virgin olive oil can help hydrate and soften stools, making them easier to pass," says Desiree Nielsen, a Vancouver-registered dietitian and the author of the recently published book *Good for Your Gut*.

Try taking olive oil in the morning, when your bowels are more active, and on an empty stomach. Nielsen notes that kiwis and prunes, which she often recommends to her clients, are even better studied for their laxative effects, but extra-virgin olive oil has added heart-health benefits. It's also tasty, if a little peppery after it goes down.

FOR CANKER SORES: SWISH A BIT OF HONEY



Minor canker sores (mouth ulcers) that only crop up two or three times a year are not usually a sign of an underlying problem, but they can nevertheless be painful. To speed up healing by a few days, try swishing a bit of honey around in your mouth.

Honey is high in antioxidants, which can protect the health of skin, and is also antibacterial, thanks in part to its sugar content.

In 12 out of 13 studies analysed by the University of Canberra in Australia, using honey topically on canker sores, denture irritation, or mouth sores from cancer treatment either helped them heal faster or prevented them from becoming more severe compared to control groups.

You could also try putting a glob of honey on your finger and holding it directly on the sore, says Dr Yang Gu, an oral pathologist at Dalhousie University's faculty of dentistry in Halifax, Canada. "Theoretically, your saliva will wash it off otherwise. Hold it there for one minute so it will be completely absorbed."

Not all honey is the same—raw honey may be higher in antioxidants, and pasteurised (processed) honey may contain unwanted added sweeteners—but more research is needed before scientists can say for sure which honey sources are the most beneficial.

FOR HEARTBURN: CHANGE YOUR SLEEP POSITION

The burning sensation of reflux, caused when stomach acid flows into



the oesophagus, is often more bothersome when lying down. To help deal with this, many people are prescribed medication (such as a proton pump inhibitor) for their symptoms, but a change in sleeping position can be just as effective. The goal should be to take advantage of the effect of gravity.

You can often reduce reflux by elevating your head and shoulders at night, using a foam wedge under the mattress or placing six-inch-high wooden blocks under the two upper legs of the bed. Sleeping on your left side may also make a difference, as this position places the contents of your stomach further away from the sphincter, where it joins the oesophagus.

In a 2017 trial at the Cleveland Clinic in the US state of Ohio, people with nighttime acid reflux tried special sleep-positioning cushions that kept them inclined and on their left sides. After the trial, over 90 per cent of the participants wanted to continue sleeping with the cushions.

Because pillows designed for acid reflux can be expensive, you can use

A BLACK-TEA SOAK CAN KILL GERMS AND TIGHTEN PORES, MAKING YOUR FEET SWEAT LESS

PHOTO: (PILLOW) ©GETTY IMAGES

EATING MORE FATTY FISH CAN LEAD TO FEWER, SHORTER, AND LESS SEVERE HEADACHES

regular body pillows to help you sleep on your left side more consistently through the night, or you can set regular pillows against your back. You may need to experiment with pillows that don't easily shift.

FOR SMELLY FEET: SOAK IN BLACK TEA



Your feet contain about a quarter of a million sweat glands, more per inch than any other part of your body. And it's the combination of sweat plus bacteria that's to blame when they start to stink.

A black tea soak can address both problems. Tea is high in an antibacterial compound called tannic acid, so it helps kill germs. Tannins are also astringents, which means they tighten pores when they're applied to the skin. "Marathon runners use tea bag soaks, because if you sweat less, you get fewer blisters," says Skotnicki.

Tannic acid gels are available to buy from pharmacies, but you can also make your own formula at home. Boil a couple of tea bags in about half a litre of water for 15 minutes. Dilute it with two more litres of water, and when it's cool enough, soak your feet for half an hour. Do this daily for a week until you see improvement. You can then continue to keep foot odour at bay with once-a-week maintenance soaks.

FOR WARTS: SOAK IN HOT WATER



Just as cryotherapy—treatment with extreme cold—helps get rid of common skin warts, so does extreme heat. "What you're doing is killing the virus," says Skotnicki. "If you increase the temperature in the skin cells where the virus lives, the virus can't use the cell and it dies."

A new device invented at the University of Southampton puts this principle into practice. It looks like a thick pen, which the clinician touches directly to the wart, and uses microwave energy to heat the lesion without affecting the skin around it.

In a trial, the device cleared three-quarters of treatment-resistant plantar warts; typically, a third or

PHOTO: (TEA) ©GETTY IMAGES. (TEAPOT) JUSTIN POULSEN

fewer would respond to cryotherapy. But you can also apply heat at home on your own. The goal is to use enough heat to have an effect, but not so much that you'll burn the skin. This can be achieved with hot water that's between 43.3 and 46.1 degrees Celsius (use a thermometer to be sure you have the right temperature). Immerse the area with the wart, aiming for a 30 minute soak. Do this three times a week. Within two to six weeks, you should start seeing results.

FOR SENSITIVE TEETH: RUB WITH TOOTHPASTE

We all know that brushing regularly with a toothpaste designed for sensitive teeth can ease discomfort. It contains special ingredients to coat the worn-away enamel and thus dull the sensitivity. But did you know that rubbing a high-fluoride toothpaste directly onto the tooth and leaving it there has been shown to help as well? The fluoride safeguards the enamel. Swedish researchers liken it to putting a protective "lotion" on your teeth.



Another treatment that's long been used in folk medicine is the oil from cloves. While using cloves for a toothache is not a new idea, a recent discovery at Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg, in Germany, points to the mechanism behind it. The scientists showed that exposed tooth cells contain TRPC5, a special protein responsible for transmitting sensations of cold to the brain. Cloves contain a compound called eugenol that can block TRPC5. Make your own tooth rub by crushing a couple of big pinches of cloves and blending with about 60 millilitres of olive oil.

FOR MIGRAINES: EAT FATTY FISH



A recent study spearheaded by the US National Institute on Ageing assigned people with frequent migraines into groups and gave each one a meal kit and instructions. Participants whose diets contained

TO STOP HICCUPS, STRETCH A COFFEE FILTER OVER A GLASS OF WATER AND TAKE A SIP

PHOTOS: (TOOTHPASTE) BY JUSTIN POULSEN. (SALMON) ©GETTY IMAGES

more fatty fish, such as salmon, and less linoleic acid (found in many vegetable oils), had fewer, shorter, and less severe headaches compared to those with average US diets.

Certain oils are known to trigger responses in the body, such as inflammation. The study's investigators believe that the oils people consume can trigger different responses in the nerve pathways involved in migraines.

FOR HICCUPS: DRINK WITH SUCTION



PHOTO COURTESY OF HICCAWAY

Whether it's holding your breath or gulping water, everyone has a trick for stopping hiccups—involuntary spasms of the diaphragm muscle below the lungs. The problem is, hiccup cures are usually hit-and-miss, says Dr Ali Seifi, associate professor and neurosurgeon at the University of Texas Health Science Centre at San Antonio, US.

"The remedies activate the phrenic nerve regulating the diaphragm muscle, or the vagus nerve regulating the epiglottis, which has a scientific basis," he says. But such home remedies don't always do the trick.

Seifi's solution is a special straw, which he dubbed the HiccAway, that requires five times the suction compared to a regular straw. "That's the key," he says. "It means higher and more prolonged contraction of the diaphragm muscle, which triggers a longer duration of nerve activation."

That pressure, coupled with swallowing to activate the phrenic and vagus nerves, "resets" the brain. Over 90 per cent of participants in a 2021 study said the HiccAway method stopped their hiccups when they tried it.

For a home version, Seifi suggests filling a glass with water and stretching a coffee filter (or paper towels) over the top. Hold it in place or secure it with a rubber band, then tip the glass toward your mouth and apply as much suction as it takes to drink the water. The physics may not be as precise as those of the special straw, he says, but "I have tried this myself, and it works!" ■

Deer-ly Held Traditions

Even after a quarter of a century has passed, red deer on the border between the Czech Republic and old West Germany still do not dare to cross the divide. During the Cold War, electric fences were installed which made the Czech-German boundary impossible for them to pass. Today's red deer are still intent on avoiding the Iron Curtain

Source: bbc.com/news/world-europe-27129727

Rise And Shine

How to put a spring in your step on those cold, dark winter mornings

Wake up naturally Admittedly, this might be tough for commuters, but for those who work from home or are retired, switching off our alarm clocks could help us make a better start to the day.

A 2021 survey of over 1,000 employees by sleep health website Each Night found that people who woke up naturally felt fully awake more quickly than their counterparts who used an alarm, and were ten per cent more likely to feel well rested throughout the day. They were also more likely to eat a healthy breakfast, exercise more and have a positive outlook.

The key to waking up naturally is to go to bed at a time that allows your body to find its natural—or circadian—rhythm. Turning in at the same time every night will help regulate your body clock.



See the light

Don't be tempted to lie in bed in the morning, but get out in the sunlight as soon as possible after waking. This will help you feel alert during the day and promote sleepiness at bedtime. The fresh air, smells, physical exercise and the mood boost you get from nature will enhance your sense of wellbeing.

Delay your coffee

Cortisol—your body's main stress hormone—levels are higher when you wake up, giving us a natural energy boost. Save the caffeine kick until after your morning walk when you're more likely to need it.

TURNING IN AT THE SAME TIME EVERY NIGHT WILL HELP REGULATE YOUR BODY CLOCK

Have a cold shower

Yes, we realise dousing yourself with chilly water on a chilly day might not be that appealing, but it could really liven you up in the morning. Let it run cold for a minute and then take the rest of your shower at your usual toasty temperature, or start warm and turn the water to cold at the end.

The health benefits? A 2015 Dutch study found that people who had a hot shower followed by up to 90 seconds of a cold shower for 30 days had a 29 per cent drop in work absences through sickness. Other research has suggested cold showers could alleviate depression.

Get moving—but gently

Our body stiffens up as we sleep, so a few stretches to loosen up in the morning will help get you ready for the day ahead. Move for 30 minutes first, though, to get blood flowing around your body and your muscles stretching safely. That could be by walking or in your everyday routine of showering and dressing. Then do a few light stretches—you'll find lots of suggestions online.

Have protein for breakfast

Shun sugar which causes blood glucose spikes and embrace protein instead. Switching to breakfasts containing proteins and wholegrains will keep you fuller for longer, giving you energy and making you less tempted to snack before lunch. Eggs on wholemeal toast and porridge are ideal. Pour skimmed milk on top and add fruit to your breakfast oats (no sugar needed). ■



Susannah Hickling is twice winner of the Guild of Health Writers Best Consumer Magazine Health Feature

6 Ways To Beat The Festive Binge

How to enjoy the winter holiday season without overindulging

1 **Finish when you're full** When it comes to eating during the festive season, always ask yourself the question, "Will eating this bring me joy?" That will help you put festive feasting into perspective. With that in mind, don't feel you have to overeat. Ask yourself that crucial question before you reach for a second or third helping.

2 **Skip the foods you like less** Treat yourself to the foods you love, but pass on the ho-hum holiday indulgences. If Christmas cake or your mum's trifle is an integral part of the happiness of the season, by all means help yourself to a portion. But don't feel obliged to scoff Christmas pudding or parsnips or panettone just because they're there. And, if you're faced with a groaning buffet, reach for one small plate, fill it with the foods that look most delicious, and leave it at that.

3 **Say no nicely** At a party, don't feel under pressure to overindulge when you're offered food or drink. A straightforward "No, thank you" is all that's needed. Don't feel you have to make excuses or apologise.

4 **Share your edible gifts** Dreading those gift-wrapped chocolates that come your way at this time of year? No problem. Accept them graciously and then share them equally as graciously.

5 **Start food-free traditions** The season of goodwill isn't all about eating, as we well know. So think about ways you can celebrate with the whole family that don't involve cramming your face with yet more food. Make a trip to a Christmas market or outdoor skating rink a new tradition. Actually go for that brisk winter walk rather than just talking about it and then settling down in front of the telly instead!

6 **Ditch the guilt** Food shaming yourself will only make you feel worse. If you're eating a bit more than usual, then simply remind yourself that it's in the spirit of family, friends and celebration and make it a joyful experience, rather than a blame game. This will help you develop a year-round healthy attitude towards food.

*For more weekly health tips and stories, sign up to our newsletter at **readersdigest.co.uk***

Ask The Expert: *Loneliness*

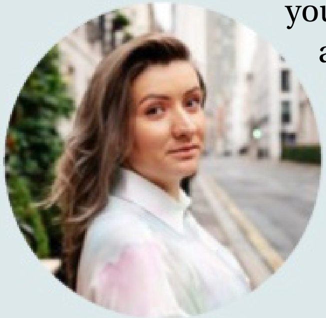
Denise Iordache is a cognitive behavioural hypnotherapist

How did you become a specialist in loneliness?

I started my practice specialising in sleep disorders, and soon came to realise how strongly loneliness was linked with poor sleep. I've expanded on my skills and understanding of loneliness in order to know how I could best serve my clients.

What is loneliness?

It's an emotion. We probably all experience it at some point, but loneliness is very complex and unique to each of us. There's a big difference between loneliness and solitude. Being alone is a choice, whereas feeling lonely isn't something we impose on ourselves. You want to be around people, but something is making you feel unwanted, empty or isolated, so you're not having the meaningful connection you seek.



When does it become a problem?

When it becomes chronic, when you're feeling lonely over a long period of time. It can turn into a mental and physical health problem, and can be a symptom or cause of depression. It can affect self esteem. You might turn to food and not feel motivated to exercise, as chronic loneliness is linked to increased risk of high blood pressure, obesity and even dementia.

How can you manage loneliness?

Accept and acknowledge it. Loneliness is a valid feeling. Don't brush it under the carpet, as that doesn't help solve the problem. Seek joy in little things, like smelling a flower or a walk in nature. Celebrate each small achievement. When you decide to change things and seek a connection with others, consider a like-minded group. A client of mine joined a sewing group and it was very successful.

How can people help someone who is lonely?

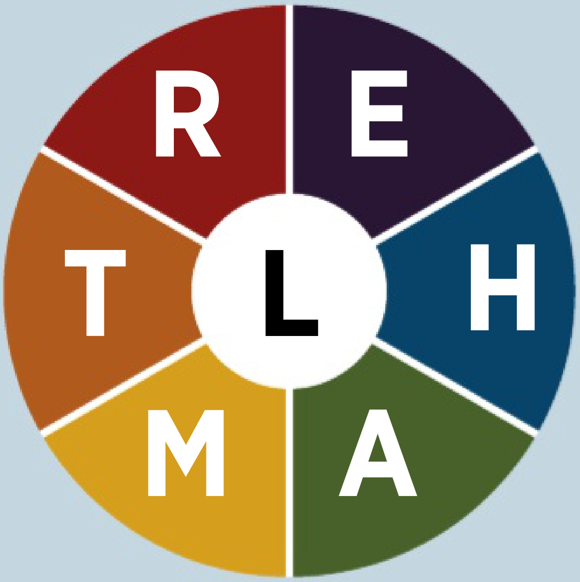
The best approach is to sensitively ask how they are and what they're doing, and listen to the answer in a non-judgemental way. If you want to invite them to do something with you, do it. If they say no, don't be discouraged from asking again. They might need time before feeling ready to say yes. ■

For more information, visit joyspacetherapy.com and nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/feeling-lonely

Happy Holidays

WIN!
A luxury artisan hamper

Winter Wordwheel





artisan DELI market

Find words of three or more letters, and all must contain the central letter.
TARGET: Excellent: 30 or more words. Good: 24 words. Fair: 20 words.

There is one word relating to winter warmers which uses all the letters.
Write this word on your entry form or enter online. **See page 151.**

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Winter Ways:
Top Tips On Staying Warmer In Colder Months

With the rising cost of living affecting all of us, staying warmer this winter feels like it's going to be a difficult task. However, there are things you can do to make sure that you're keeping healthy—and keeping the heat in. Read on for some small tips that could make a big difference...

LOVE LAYERS

Rather than snuggling into one big jumper, think about wearing plenty of thin layers instead. Multiple thin layers allow warm air to become trapped between the layers, which acts as an insulator—keeping you warmer than if you just wore one thick one. Don't forget the thermal underwear when it's really chilly.

HEAT CAREFULLY

If you're able to heat all of your rooms, keep your main living room at 18–21°C (64–70°F) and the rest of your house around 16°C (61°F). However, given the price of fuel, if this isn't possible, be selective. Heat the living room during the

WINTER WARMERS



day and the bedroom just before you go to sleep. And don't forget to have your heating system serviced regularly to make sure it's working well.

WEAR WOOL

Clothes made from wool, cotton and fleece synthetic fibres are the warmest. Along with layers, make sure you wrap up in a scarf, hat and gloves when you pop outside, and keep your feet warm with some cosy bed socks in the evening.

WARM FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Winter is a great time for rustling up soups and stews, but even a bowl of hot porridge can set you up from breakfast onwards. Eating hot, nutritious dishes can keep you warm and healthy, so try to eat at least one hot meal a day, along with sipping regular hot drinks.

SLEEP COSY

When you're in bed, use either a hot water bottle (filled with hot, but not boiling water to avoid scalding) or an

electric blanket, which you can use on a timer to ensure it's off prior to going to sleep. Thermal nightwear can also make a difference, as can having the right bed covers—the higher the tog rating, the warmer the duvet, so make sure yours is 10.5 to 13.5, which is ideal for autumn and winter.

DO THE HOUSEWORK

Staying active is good for your health in general, but if it is too cold to walk outside, then catching up on the household chores is a great way of making sure you're getting up and about. Even light exercise can keep you warm, so grab that hoover or duster, get moving and make your house sparkle...

KEEP THE COLD OUT

Insulating your home doesn't need to cost hundreds. Think about buying a cheap draft excluder (or making your own) to keep out drafts around doors. Thicker curtains can keep the cold from windows. Pop a rug on the floor for additional insulation—if you're worried about a trip-hazard, then make sure you add an anti-slip mat underneath. And as the floor is usually the coldest part of the house, think about also putting your feet up on a stool when you're sitting down to help stay a little bit warmer.



FURTHER HELP

While the government has recently brought in measures to help with the cost of living, depending on your circumstances you may be entitled to additional benefits.

The Winter Fuel or Cold Weather Payments may be paid automatically, but if you don't currently receive them, visit **gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment** or **call 0800 731 0160** to see if you're eligible.

You might also be able to get help for energy-saving improvements to your home with an Affordable Warmth Grant, which could help with heating and insulation improvements. For more information, call the **Energy Saving Advice Service** or visit **gov.uk/energy-company-obligation.**




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Breaking With Christmas Tradition

Dr Max muses on the true spirit of Christmas when a steadfast festive belief is questioned

"WHAT? YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS?" I shouted in disbelief. "What do you mean there wasn't a donkey?" Clearly this nun had gone mad. She smiled angelically at me and persevered.

"Most scholars agree that given Mary and Joseph's social and economic position, it's unlikely that they would ever have travelled on a donkey. And of course there's no scriptural evidence to support the idea that there was a donkey."

Evidence? She wants evidence?

"But what about the Christmas carol 'Little Donkey'?" I asked triumphantly. "What about all those Christmas cards with the donkey on? Everyone knows there was a donkey. How else did they get from Nazareth to Bethlehem?"

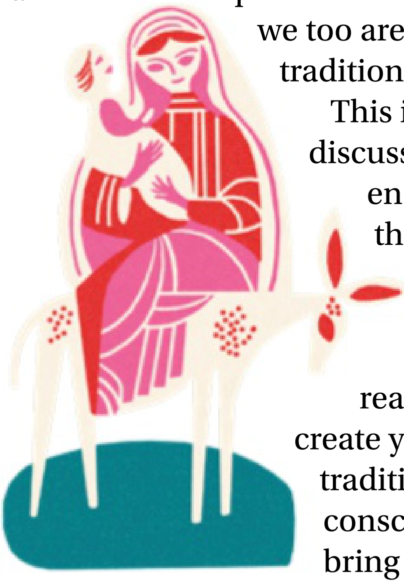
"They walked or possibly hitched a ride on a wagon," she offered, rather prosaically. Huh. What does a nun know about the Bible? I immediately started scouring the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. There must be a donkey here somewhere. Nope, nothing. I double checked. No, not even a whiff. I recoiled in horror. My world had collapsed.

I was 16 at the time, studying scripture for my A-Levels, and the nun who had broken this earth-shattering news was my teacher. I looked at Sister Mary Stephen in her habit, gently shaking her head at me. "It doesn't matter that there wasn't a donkey," she said calmly.

Going to a co-ed convent, I wanted to take the opportunity to learn about one of the most important books ever written from someone who had dedicated her life to it: a nun. So, along with my science A-levels, I took religious education. Regardless of your religious conviction, the Bible is a fascinating historical document, but when it came to the Christmas story, instead of being the voice of reason, the man of rational science, it was I who held on to the traditions and unfounded beliefs, and Sister Mary Stephen who challenged me.

The truth is, of course, Sister Mary Stephen didn't need the donkey, because she knew what the Christmas story was really about. The "meaning" of Christmas, which is so often talked about at this time of year,

operates on two levels. Firstly, there is the level of tradition; the rituals and objects we associate with it. Psychologically, we hold on to these because they root us historically and give us meaning. They develop and are incorporated into our internal world as a way of defending ourselves from the chaos of the world outside. Turkey, carols, Christmas trees and so on are comforting, familiar objects, and are often seen as an important aspect of Christmas. It's interesting that so many of these traditions, which we like to think of as being as old as the hills, actually only go back a few generations. Go back a few hundred years and the Christmas traditions would be very different to the ones we hold now. But traditions are important because they bring us together in a shared sense of belonging. We are social animals, and we need to feel connected to one another. We create a mythology around key events like Christmas in order to give us a sense of shared, common ancestry, even though this is in itself often a myth.



Of course on the second and deeper level, the Christmas story is one of celebration and love. Tradition may be useful psychologically, but ultimately it's fragile and finite. A Christmas based solely on traditions will soon lose its meaning because tradition is easily invented and just as easily destroyed. The real meaning of Christmas is love, not donkeys or baubles.

I'm a great believer in the power of tradition and ritual, but knowing that most of our traditions were invented by our ancestors can be quite liberating, as it means that we too are free to create our own traditions to tie us together.

This is something I often discuss with my patients and encourage them to try themselves. As families become increasingly fragmented and atomised, I think realising that you can create your own family traditions, and doing so consciously, can help to bring people together and forge a sense of unity.

Right up until she died earlier this year, Sister Mary Stephen would send me a Christmas card with a donkey on it every year and I would do the same for her.

It had become quite a tradition. ■



Max is a hospital doctor, author and columnist. He currently works full time in mental health for the NHS. His new book, *The Marvellous Adventure of Being Human*, is out now

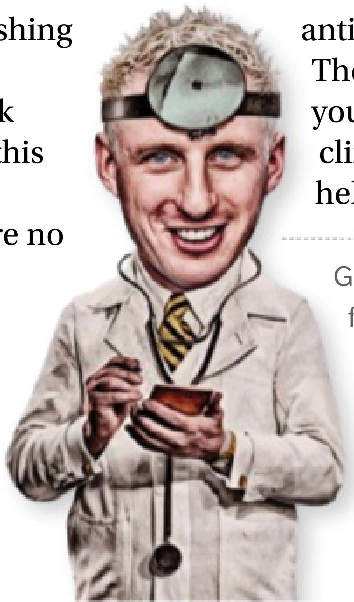
The Doctor Is In

Dr Max Pemberton

Q: My migraines have been getting worse! I have always had symptoms like flashing lights, numbness and headaches, but more recently I've also started feeling extremely nauseous. Any ideas how to manage this? *- John*

A: Migraines can be incredibly debilitating so I'm sorry that you've been having these and that they appear to be getting worse. I think people who haven't had one struggle to appreciate the impact they can have on one's life. Migraine is a common health condition, affecting around one in every five women and around one in every 15 men. They usually begin in early adulthood. There are different types. Migraine with aura means someone has a severe headache and includes warning signs such as flashing lights, or other visual problems, and feeling sick and dizzy. It sounds like this is the type that you suffer from. Sometimes there are no warning signs (migraine without aura) and sometimes people experience the "aura" symptoms without the headache. The exact cause isn't fully understood, although it's thought to involve changes to the blood flow and chemicals in the brain.

Some people can identify triggers such as foods that can bring on a migraine or make them more likely, while for others they seem to occur at random. They tend to become less frequent or severe as people get older, but for an unfortunate few they can start to get worse. Some people find that over-the-counter painkillers help, but if for you these aren't adequate, then there is another type of medication called a triptan that can help. These are available from a pharmacist or doctor. You don't mention if you've tried these yet, but I think it's worthwhile going to see your doctor to get checked out. They may consider prescribing you some anti-sickness medication too. They may also decide to refer you to a specialist migraine clinic if necessary. Hope this helps and best of luck. ■



Got a health question for our resident doctor? Email it confidentially to askdrmax@readersdigest.co.uk

ILLUSTRATION BY *Javier Muñoz*

ROGERBLACK FITNESS

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There's no excuse not to get on your bike this Winter. Get your indoor cycling fix and feel the benefits.

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Anna, *Farnham*

Trustpilot

Excellent **4.8**/5

Roger Black is offering a 10% discount on the full www.rogerblackfitness.com range of home fitness equipment for all Reader's Digest readers. Please use discount code DIGEST10 at checkout.

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Give Your Brain Some Food For Thought

Tasty ways to "time travel" from our memory expert, Jonathan Hancock

YOU TAKE A small, gel-like ball from the 3D printer, pop it in your mouth… and you're suddenly transported back in time to a moment from your distant past.

Sounds like something from a sci-fi film, doesn't it? But in fact it's real, and exactly what happened to the people involved in an experiment run by memory researchers in the UK.

Using the latest food-printing technology, they created balls of flavour to match pleasant experiences described by their volunteers. One test subject, for example, remembered enjoying roast beef and horseradish a quarter of a century earlier. So those flavours were replicated in printed gel—and the impact of tasting them again was intense. The flavours "took me back 25 years in one bound", the participant reported. "I could place myself at the table in the room… Suddenly I was back!"

Another volunteer ate a gel flavoured with Thai curry, and seconds later could hear the chopping of vegetables, and see a friend sitting cross-legged nearby—all in their mind, but powerfully realistic nonetheless.

And the carefully crafted tastes didn't just remind people of the past, but let them experience good times in their lives once again. For many it was a surprisingly emotional experience.

And you don't need a 3D printer to give it a go. I'm a child of the Seventies, and just imagining a mouthful of butterscotch Angel Delight takes me back to happy family tea times. Pick a food-based moment you'd like to relive, and try a few experiments yourself.

- **You could cook something that connects you to your childhood**, and—as you eat it—see what it does for your memory. Which emotions bubble up? And which other senses come to life?
- **Try the same thing for a friend or family member.** Get them to describe a food memory to you, then do your best to serve up something similar and talk to them about its impact. How does it make them feel? Do any surprising extra details re-emerge?
- **And if you're ever struggling to remember something from years ago**, focus on some food you had around the same time. What was on the menu at that friend's wedding? Or what did you eat after a particularly great night out in your teens? Use the feelings this evokes to help your brain rebuild everything else.

Enjoy the delicious feeling of good memories flooding back. Because food can nourish us in more ways than one! ■



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Should We Remove Age-Range Filters From Dating Apps?



IN THE WORLD of online dating, being ageist is exceedingly easy.

All you need to do is add in a filter, and poof! People of certain ages won't be shown as potential matches. Like magic, any prejudice can be passed off as a personal preference.

And it's women aged over 50 who are too often counted out.

"The men I contact don't respond AT ALL," wrote one 65-year-old user on the discussion app Reddit. "I've noticed that more than a few men use a lower age for 'search purposes,'" wrote another, referring to those who lie about how old they are so that they'll show up in searches for younger people.

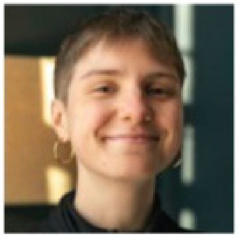
While no app can stop ageism entirely, there's surely a duty of care here to make older users feel welcome. So what if we removed the option to filter by age?

I'm not suggesting that age be kept a secret. Rather, it wouldn't be used to exclude people before they can even get started.

In this (perhaps idealised) vision of online dating, more important things like people's interests could be front-and-centre instead. At the very least, this would create more chances for connection—and prevent people from being reduced to a set of metrics.

Dating filters don't work as well as you'd think, anyway—even when they're used with good intentions. Some folks pick filters based on traits they find desirable, because they think this increases their odds of finding someone they'll click with.

But this actually doesn't have any bearing on how good a match you are for each other.



Monica Karpinski is a writer and editor focused on women's health, sex, and relationships. She is the founder of women's health media platform *The Femedic*

In 2012, the Association for Psychological Science found that dating apps that match people based on their preferences aren't any more likely than any other method to result in a successful romance.

This is because the important stuff that makes relationships work—communication, trust, being able to get along—can't be predicted from a set of facts you have about someone you don't actually know.

And the more requirements you have, the narrower your dating pool becomes.

Taking into account the average person's romantic criteria, researchers from the University of Bath and dating website eHarmony calculated that single folks have a one in 562 chance of finding someone who's their type on paper.

Out of around 23 million singles in the UK, that works out to being about 41,000 people who'd fit the bill.

The research also found that when you narrow your age requirements to someone six years older or younger than you, you remove four-fifths of your options.

> *When you narrow your age requirements to someone six years older or younger than you, you remove four-fifths of your options*

These are estimates that should be taken with a pinch of salt. But they do suggest that if we were more open to meeting people we don't expect we'll like, we'd increase our chances of finding love.

Dating apps can be a great way to meet new people, but it's important we recognise their limitations. We should remember that these are people we're swiping left or right on, not a list of products on Amazon.

And if you do want to use filters, I'd suggest reflecting on why those criteria are important to you. For example, people in marginalised groups might seek connection with others like them, who share their experiences. Others might want to find a match with the same sexual orientation. In cases like these, filters can genuinely be helpful.

Online dating platforms have a responsibility to protect their users from discrimination and they must do so by design. And while taking away the option to filter in ways that exercise prejudice won't magically fix inequality, it's a step in the right direction. ■

Relationship Advice

Monica Karpinski

Q: **I've heard horror stories about online dating for over-fifties, with men only wanting to date women ten years their junior or looking for a house cleaner after they've become widowed—is there hope for finding a fulfilling new partner online at my age?**

- *Victoria*

A: If you've just read my column, you might be surprised to learn that I actually don't think online dating when aged over 50 is hopeless. Yes, there are horror stories—but browse through any online forum about dating apps and you'll find women in their twenties, thirties and forties talking about encounters they'd rather forget.

But if you accept the limitations of online dating and are clear on your boundaries, you can see it as just another way to meet people.

After all, these platforms won't increase your chances compared to any other dating method. But they can help by increasing the amount of people you'll meet.

And more people than ever are using these platforms. According to dating website eHarmony, the amount of singles over 50 using online dating services doubled between 2010 and 2018.

What's tough about dating this way is that you don't really get a sense of who someone is from their profile. If you find a person you click with and feel safe doing so, you could suggest speaking over the phone before meeting up. This will give you a better feel for their personality, too.

Generally, it's better to meet sooner rather than later, so the chemistry doesn't fizzle out. Give it a few weeks, I say.

Plus, there are thousands of platforms to choose from that have different features and rules of engagement (the woman contacts first on Bumble, for example). There are some apps aimed at over-fifties but these aren't everyone's cup of tea. Shop around and see what you're comfortable with.

Remember that you're in charge of your experience, and if you don't like online dating then that's fine. You aren't hurting your chances at finding love by logging off—it just means you'll find it another way. ■

Got a question for our resident sex and relationships expert? Email it confidentially to thelovedoctor@readersdigest.co.uk

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Happy Holidays

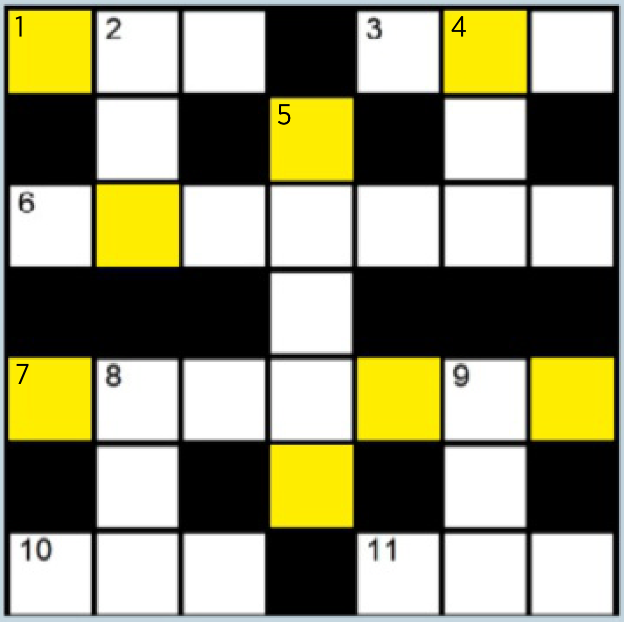
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Prize Crossword

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Complete the crossword and the letters in the yellow squares can be sorted to reveal a word related to Christmas. Write this word on the entry form. See page 151.



ACROSS

1 Self-esteem (3)
3 Cancer indicator (1,1,1)
6 Israeli financial centre (3,4)
7 Casual tops (1-6)
10 Lubricate (3)
11 Bar choice (1,1,1)

DOWN

2 Command to a horse (3)
4 Respectful title in India (3)
5 Monty Python's Michael ____ (5)
8 Snow runner (3)
9 Apex (3)


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If I Ruled The World
Julian Lloyd Webber

Julian Lloyd Webber is an award-winning cellist and conductor who has performed with many of the world's greatest orchestras



Music would be more accessible (especially in schools)

Music has been allowed to slip out of our school system—they pretend it's part of the national curriculum, but it really isn't. A whole lot of children never get access to music, unless their parents can afford to pay for it. And I think that's completely wrong. I hate that people say that classical music is elitist. I believe that composers wrote for everybody, so to see whole sections of society growing up excluded from it is completely wrong.

Music can be such a positive force and it needs to be more easily accessed. I've worked on the "30 under 30 Project" with Classic FM, which began in lockdown. I was working with young musicians who were just devastated because suddenly all their plans for live performances disappeared. The project provided an outlet for the young artists' talents by playing their recordings instead. Now there's a Sky Arts TV special about it, too. It's something that has grown into a great platform for young musicians.

All government decisions would require proper consultation

I think that before introducing controversial or extreme measures that affect so many people, in quite possibly a negative way, proper consultation should be done first. It shouldn't just be that something can be pushed through Parliament

without proper consultation—we've seen that recently and steps should be taken to prevent that happening again.

Referendums would require a 60 per cent majority to pass

Another serious one: I think referendums should never be passed at 50 per cent, it should be 60/40. You can't pass these far, wide-ranging changes without a bigger majority! The Brexit vote was 52 to 48, the Scottish vote was very close. I'm not saying anything about which way I believe it should have gone but I think the margin should be far greater than 49 per cent to 51 per cent.

Plastic would be banned

We have to look at banning plastic, because what it's doing in the sea and to wildlife is just appalling. To produce something that's indestructible in this way and just dumping it is completely wrong.

Copyright laws should be changed

At the moment copyright laws mean that composers earn a lot more from royalties than performers do, and I think that's not right. Obviously composers can't do without people performing the music, so why are performers receiving so much less royalty? And even considering that music-streaming services are so popular right now, performers are still only receiving a pittance per stream. I think that's wrong and that the royalties are completely unevenly distributed.

Football team ownership should be tested

The Football League have a test for new owners called the fit-and-proper-persons test but it's very weak, and some football clubs have really suffered. My local football team was taken over by a guy who showed that he was incapable of running a football club. We nearly went out of business! He wasn't paying the players, he wasn't paying any ground staff, the pitch was unplayable by the end. There should be something in the rules to stop that happening because it's destroying people's livelihoods and communities.

A solution for cladding issues

I would find a solution for the cladding issue. I read about one lady who couldn't sell her flat because of the cladding and that is devastating for people. Grenfell showed the dangers of cladding. It's not right that people who have bought a property in good faith find that they're expected to live in a place that is dangerous and unsellable. ■

AS TOLD TO ALICE GAWTHROP

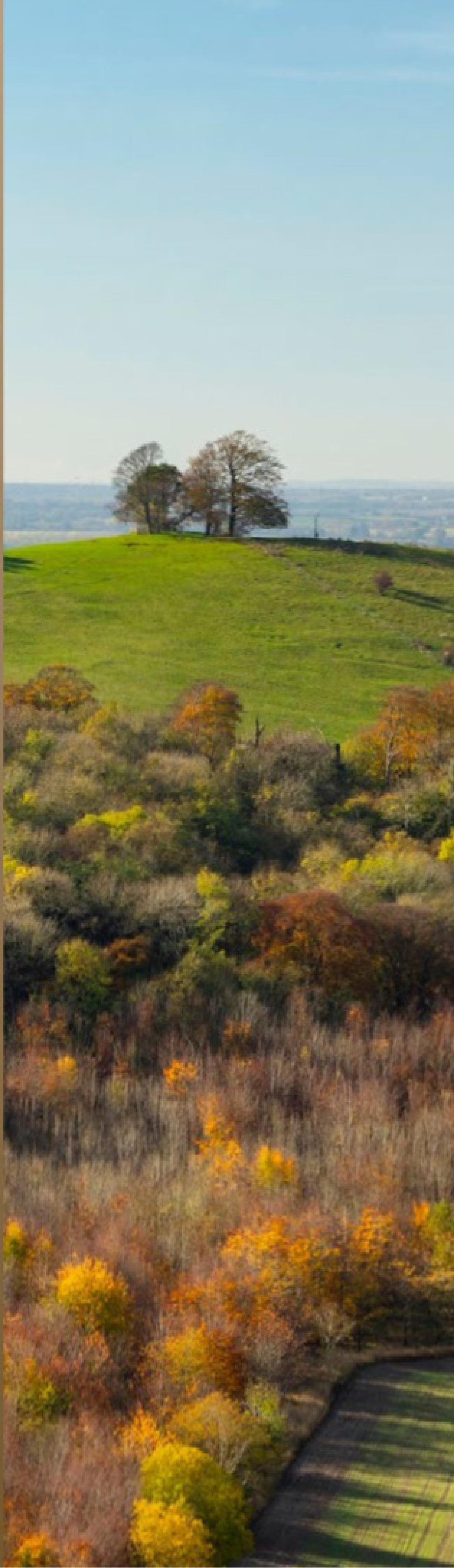
Next summer, Julian and his wife Jiaxin will be taking Bach's cello suites, *Bach Revealed—by Julian and Jiaxin Lloyd Webber,* to festivals across the UK

My Britain:

CHILTERN HILLS

Stretching for 45 miles across North London, from Goring-on-Thames to Hitchin, taking in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, the Chiltern Hills are home to a vast diversity of residents, countryside and businesses. In 1965, almost half of the area was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty—not surprising when you consider the stunning stretches of the Thames, the rolling hills and boundless greenery that make up its landscape. We spoke to two local businessmen about their lives and livelihoods in the Chiltern Hills, to get a sense for what makes this corner of Britain so special.

By Anna Walker





The view looking out from Coombe Hill towards Cymbeline's Mount

DAVID HOLLIDAY

David Holliday, 41, is the chef and co-owner at The Bottle & Glass Inn (bottleandglassinn.com) in Binfield Heath and The Hart Street Tavern (hartstreettavern.com) in Henley-on-Thames



I HAVE LIVED IN the Chiltern Hills for 12 years. After a stint in London running the Harwood Arms with Bret Graham and Mike Robinson, we always knew we wanted to come back to the area that my wife grew up in. During my time working at the Pot Kiln, we would host cooking demos at the Henley Food Festival, and I fell in love with the natural beauty of the area. It brought me back to my childhood spent living on a farm.

I love the community around me here in the Chiltern Hills. We've made great relationships, particularly through hosting events in the village of Binfield Heath, where the Bottle & Glass Inn is located, and also within my daughter's school. Just last week I cooked pizza at the local nursery.

I love that there are producers, farmers and artisans here, but it's still close to metropolitan bustling towns. Henley is my favourite town and I always wanted to open a restaurant in the centre of it. The Hart Street Tavern does fresh food daily and has been a great achievement of ours. I think my favourite spot here is Christmas Common. A picturesque hamlet, it's my favourite spot for a brisk winter walk taking in views of the Chilterns.

The Bottle & Glass Inn [pictured] is the most beautiful pub with its thatched roof, modern dining room, and amazing country walks on the doorstep in just the perfect village. I love the fire, the beams and the warm welcome. We always wanted to create a venue that the community would love and feel a part of. It's grown so much since we opened in 2017 and the team are such a huge part of the growth, we couldn't do it without them.







JACOB WILSON

Jacob Wilson, 28, is the owner and master distiller at the Henley Distillery (thehenleydistillery.co.uk)

I WAS BORN and raised in Henley-on-Thames, and though I left the area for a while to pursue my career, I always knew I wanted to come back to my home town to set up my own distillery.

Growing up, I was a keen rower, so my favourite place in the Chiltern Hills is probably the riverside in Henley… or even better, the river in Henley. That will always be a special place for me.

I love the diversity here, not only of the countryside but also of local producers. Since we opened The Henley Distillery, the local support has been fantastic. We have found that people are really eager to get behind local producers and the uptake has been amazing.



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Happy Holidays

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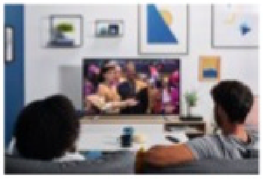
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THE ✦ JOY ✦ OF ✦ GIVING

Up In LIGHTS

A community puts on a dazzling display of support for a grieving family

BY *Rebecca Meiser*

FOR SOME, HANGING Christmas decorations is yet another holiday chore. But for the Pascucci family, stringing lights and decorating the yard of their home in New York was always a time of celebration.

Starting in early November, Anthony Pascucci, the family patriarch, and his older sister, Connie, would visit local shops to check out new decorations and to dream up their vision for that year's extravaganza.

Anthony's son, Anthony Jr, and daughter, Sara, shared the home and they pitched in as well. Anthony Jr helped with the wiring, while Sara hung ornaments on the tree inside the house, playing "White Christmas" to keep everyone in the spirit.

In 2020, as in every other year, Anthony Sr strung colourful lights all around their roof until it looked as if sparkles were dripping onto

PHOTO BY JOLEEN ZUBEK

the porch below. On the front lawn, he inflated a large snowman and a Rudolph with a glowing red nose. The place looked like a scene from a Christmas storybook.

Anthony Sr, 60, had outdone himself, as if the brightness of their lights could counter the darkness of the COVID-19 pandemic. "It was just such a rough year that he tried his best to make it extra special," Sara says.

On Christmas Eve, the whole

An unsigned note arrived in February. "Take your Christmas lights down!" it read

house twinkled with lights, and gifts were piled under the tree. Everyone was looking forward to spending Christmas Day together as a family.

Then Connie got a call. Someone she worked with had tested positive for COVID. Though Connie didn't have any symptoms, she decided to get tested right away. Her rapid test came back positive.

Anthony Sr, Anthony Jr, and Sara all tested positive too. Sadly, they agreed their Christmas celebration would have to be cancelled.

At first, everyone's symptoms seemed manageable. But right after the new year, on January 4, Anthony Sr started having trouble breathing. Anthony Jr took him to the hospital, where he was admitted.

Five days later, Connie began feeling weak and wouldn't eat. Sara called an ambulance, but Connie died before they got to the hospital. Less than a week later, Anthony Sr also passed away.

Sara says the following weeks were the worst of her life. Grief left her doubled over in pain. On top of that, "we were still recovering from COVID-19 ourselves," she says.

In addition to helping to plan funerals for her father and her aunt, Sara had to figure out the mortgage payments and transfer the utility bills to her name. And perhaps hardest of all, she had to try to explain to her 18-month-old son, Robbie, the concept of death. It was almost too much to take.

But when she pulled up to the house at the end of a long day, the twinkling Christmas lights brought her a spark of joy. "It made us happy to see them," she says.

The lights were one of the last mementos Sara and Anthony Jr had of their beloved family members when they were still alive and healthy. Taking them down felt like a final act of closure she and her brother weren't ready to take. So they kept them up.

One day in February, Sara received a typed note in the mail. "Take your

PHOTO BY JOLEEN ZUBEK

Christmas lights down!" the unsigned letter read.

Sara looked at the paper in shock. Then she got angry. "We were already dealing with so much," she says.

Sara could have bottled up that anger, but she decided to write about it instead. "I wanted to remind people that we all had a tough year. We all have been through so much and people should be a little more caring toward each other," she says.

She shared the letter on Facebook, adding a note of her own: "If you know of a person who would do something so insensitive like this, please pass along my message." She ended the post with this: "Be kind to people because you never know what they are going through."

Sara's inbox quickly filled with messages of support. A local news station learned what had happened and ran a segment about it. People started sending Sara letters and Facebook messages about how they'd lost relatives, too, and how it was especially tough to lose loved ones around the holidays.

The prevailing sentiment from friends old and new: keep the Christmas lights up.

"I know what it feels like to lose someone and not want to put their things away. It's very hard," one man told her when he stopped by with roses. Neighbours sent them meals and cards.

"I wasn't expecting that much support," Sara says. "But having it really helped us get through such a rough time, just knowing that people could relate."

And then something strange began to happen. Sara was driving back from work one day when she noticed that Christmas lights and decorations were appearing—or



reappearing—on houses in her neighbourhood.

The mystery had a sweet explanation: her neighbours had got together and decided, collectively, to hang their lights back up in honour of Anthony Sr and Connie.

"I couldn't believe that someone would send her this letter," neighbour Karen McGuggart told the *Washington Post*. "Losing her wonderful dad, whom all the neighbours loved, and her beautiful aunt, who was always smiling, is such a tragedy. We were heartbroken."

On Valentine's Day, Santa Claus led a a car parade down the Pascucci family's street

The support didn't stop with the decorations. The man formerly named Frank Pascuzzi—he legally changed his name to Santa Claus—spends the holidays dressing up as Father Christmas and making appearances for local organisations. When he saw Sara's story on TV, he decided to take his suit out of seasonal retirement.

On Valentine's Day, Claus rode down Sara and Anthony Jr's street in a car parade he had helped organise. One of the first cars in line blasted "Frosty the Snowman" while some 60 other vehicles decked out with flashing Christmas lights followed.

"We wanted them to see that the community was behind them," Claus says.

Sara, her brother, and her son stood outside their house and waved to the passing crowd. It had snowed the night before, so the neighbourhood was covered with a dusting of white powder. It was as if all of the world were conspiring to make sure Sara and her family had a proper Christmas.

"We got a little bit of joy back that night," Sara says.

She never learned the identity of the person who sent the note. But for the Pascucci family, that one mean-spirited deed was far outweighed by so many more acts of kindness.

"The good does outweigh the bad and most people have good hearts," Sara says.

A few weeks after the Valentine's Day Christmas parade, Sara and Anthony Jr finally took down their decorations. Sara said it was hard—"but not as hard as I think it would have been if we didn't experience all that support and love."

The family plans to keep putting on a bright and colorful Christmas.

Says Sara: "We are not going to make it a sad holiday. We will keep the tradition going."

THE ✦ JOY ✦ OF ✦ GIVING

The Christmas That CHANGED ME

My parents paid far more than they could afford for the greatest gift of my life

BY *Peter White*
FROM *THE GUARDIAN*



Peter White aged about 8, with his older brother, Colin, aged about 12

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE WHITE FAMILY

IT'S EIGHT O'CLOCK on Christmas morning, and Uncle Tom says he wants to listen to the news. My 11-year-old self is wondering why on earth grownups would be interested in the news when there are important things to be done, such as handing out presents. And then, while I am only half-listening to the radio broadcast, something weird happens: the boring newsreader begins talking about a Christmas message from the Vatican. Hadn't we heard that report earlier?

My older brother, Colin, figures out what's happening. "Pete, Pete, it's a tape recorder! We've got our tape recorder!".

We recorded anything and everything: each other, our parents, the milkman, the dog

It finally dawns on me: uncle Tom and my dad recorded the news, and are playing it back now.

I think it's quite rare to experience real excitement over a present. Children are as good as adults at knowing what is expected of them and simulating joyful surprise, even when they don't feel it. But for me this was one of those rare moments when my insides gave an involuntary lurch and the world did a little somersault.

Colin and I had both been blind from birth. Now, in the late 1950s, exciting consumer goods were coming within reach of the not-so-rich. At the special boarding school in Worcester in western England that Colin and I attended, reel-to-reel tape recorders were definitely the gizmos of choice. For blind kids, they would trump cameras every time, especially with the rise of rock 'n' roll. A recorder of your own was the height of aspiration. However, Colin—better informed and more realistic about family finances than I was—had no real expectations of getting one.

I realised, much later, that my dad probably earned about £8 a week as a carpenter. The tape recorder my parents bought us would have cost more than four times his weekly wage. They could only afford it by borrowing the money from uncle Tom, who had a thriving grocery business. I know my mum and dad would have thought long and hard before incurring the debt.

The new toy, the size of a small suitcase, dominated the rest of the Christmas holidays. Once we had mastered the controls (Colin was the technical one, but was surprisingly patient in sharing his knowledge with me), we recorded anything

and everything: each other, our parents, the milkman, the dog … And we very quickly learned how much fun we could have with it.

IT WASN'T THE first time I had been entranced by a tape recorder. I vividly remember walking into a room when I was four and hearing a child's tuneless singing. I stopped dead. "It's you," Dad said. "Noisy, aren't you?"

It turned out that he had borrowed a tape recorder because he and some friends were writing and performing songs and sketches for his former school's annual concert. And so for the first time, in the same way that a sighted child might react to seeing themselves in a mirror or a photograph, I got the sense of myself as a separate person who existed outside my head and was experienced by other people. It was exciting and embarrassing at the same time.

For a blind child growing up in the 1950s, a tape recorder offered a new perspective on the world

I took my first steps down the path to my career as a broadcaster when I returned to school after the holidays. I was lucky to be in a class



PHOTO: ©GERENME/IISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

of imaginative, creative, and radio-obsessed boys, and it wasn't long before we started to make our own embryonic radio programmes. I would wander round the school with my rudimentary microphone, recording my thoughts in the style of the voices I heard on the radio.

Most of what I talked about came from my imagination, although occasionally we would stage real events to heighten the excitement. Particularly memorable was a boxing match between Mick and Geoff (respectively the strongest and the gamest boys in the class, both totally blind). The commentary came from the only boy who had a little bit of sight, in a very passable imitation of a boxing commentator.

In fact, the biggest challenge was not finding things to do with the tape recorder but wrestling it away from Colin—it was, after all, a present for both of us. His generosity on the first day we got it did not extend to handing it over to his clumsy brother at school. "You'll break it," he would say. "You'll lose it. You'll scramble up the tapes."

To be fair, I did all those things. On one fraught occasion, I tried to disentangle a hopelessly knotted tape while standing in front of an open window and managed to get much of it enmeshed in an overhanging tree.

But ten years later, after I had



PHOTO BY JOLEEN ZUBEK

THE ✦ JOY ✦ OF ✦ GIVING

started and abandoned a university law course, I drew on the confidence gained from those early excursions into sound and walked into a radio station in the southern city of Southampton, in the hopes of selling myself as a broadcast journalist. It all nearly ended there—the receptionist told me there were no vacancies, and that I should apply to the BBC in London. I prepared to hitchhike my disillusioned way back to university.

Then luck intervened. A producer at the radio station who was putting together a weekly programme for blind people had seen me with my white cane being ushered into the elevator. He later phoned me at home and asked if I would return to Southampton to see him.

Twenty-five years later, I presented my first report for BBC TV's *Six O'Clock News*, a programme my dad had never missed. Although by then he'd been dead for more than a decade, I like to think he'd have realised that his inspired Christmas present had changed my life.

Peter White is the BBC's disability affairs correspondent

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Living A Lie

Reddit users reveal their parents' lies that they believed far longer than they should have

My fiancé thought fish could change shape and colour until the age of 17. His parents replaced his dead fish with three totally different ones when he was eight (he was on holiday) and they said fish could grow fins and change their colour

My dad told me he fought in Vietnam, and that's why he had a scar on his head. I was too young to realise he was also too young to have fought in Vietnam, and we're English

If the ice cream van played the tune, they had run out of ice cream... I was about 14 by the time I twigged

My mum told me she invented eating chicken drumsticks/wings with her hands. Said she was in a fancy restaurant struggling to eat them with a knife and fork so just picked one up, somone else saw, copied her, and the rest is history

Reader's digest

DIGESTED

TUNE INTO OUR PODCAST

Over the past year, *Reader's Digest* has navigated the woes and wonders of modern life, weighing in with leading experts on the everyday tools we need to survive and thrive in the modern world. And what better time than now to catch up?

To subscribe to *Digested* and listen to all our episodes so far—including tips on sleep, the menopause and reducing your plastic consumption—visit **readersdigest.co.uk/podcast** or search **"Digested"** on iTunes.



Happy Holidays

WIN! £250 Cash

Christmas Wordsearch

Words to look for:

SANTA
REINDEER
NORTH POLE
STOCKING
CHRISTMAS TREE
SLEIGH
TINSEL
PRESENTS
WREATH
ELVES
TURKEY
BELLS
STAR
BAUBLES
DECEMBER
CAROLS
SCROOGE
CANDLE
SNOWMAN
MISTLETOE
WINTER
HOLLY

S	E	L	V	E	S	S	C	R	O	O	G	E	H
P	A	F	S	J	C	A	R	O	L	S	Q	M	D
R	U	N	R	S	T	O	C	K	I	N	G	B	E
E	F	T	T	M	I	S	T	L	E	T	O	E	C
S	N	B	O	A	E	M	W	M	S	B	J	Q	E
E	S	E	R	Z	U	X	J	R	L	P	N	V	M
N	N	L	B	E	W	I	N	T	E	R	0	Q	B
T	O	L	E	A	I	V	A	G	I	A	R	E	E
S	W	S	Y	B	U	N	Y	Y	G	S	T	A	R
E	M	Y	C	Y	Q	B	D	K	H	D	H	H	Y
C	A	N	D	L	E	T	L	E	N	X	P	S	V
V	N	T	U	R	K	E	Y	E	E	L	O	B	N
E	I	B	Z	H	O	L	L	Y	S	R	L	I	H
C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	T	R	E	E	E

Can you find all these festive words in our Christmas wordsearch grid? One of them cannot be found and will be your prize answer.

Words can run in straight lines in any direction, cross them off as you find them, and the missing word you have remaining is the winning word – simply write this word on the entry form or enter online. See page 151.

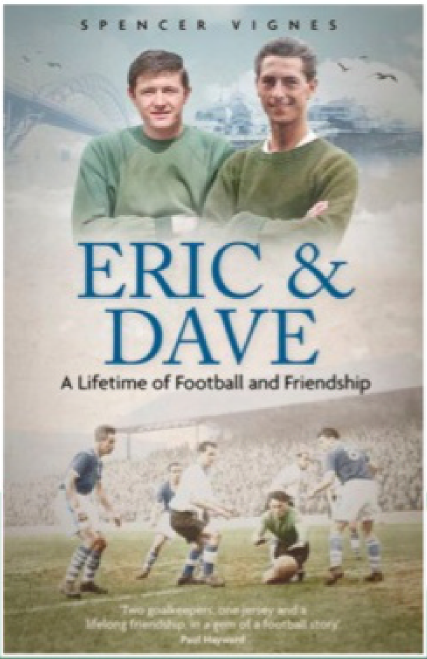
Keeping On

The story of Eric Gill and Dave Hollins, sport's most enduring friendship



Eric and Dave today

Spencer Vignes tells us about the unique friendship which inspired his new book *Eric & Dave*, the story of two footballers and former rivals who first met almost 70 years ago





"You don't make many friends in football," says Dave Hollins matter of factly. "At least not close ones. But I've come to realise over the years that Eric and I are different. We've been through so much, both together and as individuals. And we're still here. After all this time, getting on for almost 70 years from when we first met, we're still here."



In November 1955, Dave, then 17, pitched up at Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club on trial as a rookie goalkeeper. He impressed and was handed his first professional contract worth—stop sniggering at the back—£7.50 per week. It wasn't long before he met the man whose job, in effect, he was there to shoot at, namely Brighton's first-team goalkeeper Eric Gill. Despite being rivals for the same position, the two men became friends. Good friends. Later on, when Dave returned to Brighton from doing his National Service and found himself without a place to live, it was Eric and his wife Ida who put a roof over his head at the cosy guest house they ran as a sideline to Eric's football career. Dave ended up staying the best part of two years—that's how close they were.

In the years that followed, Eric made headlines around the world by equalling the Football League record for the number of consecutive games played by a goalkeeper. Dave was eventually poached by Newcastle United for the eye-watering sum of £11,000 and went on to become the Welsh international goalkeeper during the early-to-mid 1960s, making his debut against the great Brazilian striker Pelé. On retiring from the game, they lived busy lives as a hotelier (Eric) and interior decorator (Dave) as well as husbands and fathers. Yet they always remained the closest of friends, speaking regularly and meeting up whenever they could, even when living in different parts of the country.

Today, Eric and Dave remain thick as thieves, living just a short drive away from each other in the Sussex coastal communities of Peacehaven and Ovingdean respectively. I first heard about their remarkable relationship in 2020, around the time that COVID was closing in on us all. As a long in the tooth sports writer, such a friendship struck me as truly astonishing, for three reasons. *One:* footballers aren't very good at keeping in touch with each other. They're not so much ships that pass in the night—more like ships that put into port and spend time berthed alongside each other before scattering to all points of the compass. Eventually, they retire.

Sure, there are reunion dinners for the more successful sides, while some clubs preside over former players associations which organise occasional events. However, the hard yards behind such affairs tend to be put in by people who remember those players fondly, rather than the actual players themselves. The sad truth is that when a player leaves a club, they are unlikely to speak to the majority of their ex-teammates again.

Two. Eric and Dave were rivals. Although it's often said there's



Eric as a young man working on his diving skills

an unofficial "union" among goalkeepers, formed in the knowledge that one mistake on their part can lose a match or, at worst, end careers, this empathy doesn't always extend to keepers at the same club. It certainly didn't in the 1950s, when players in the first team automatically received a better wage than those in the reserves. With bills to pay and a woman's place still largely in the home, unable to contribute financially to the running of the household, resentment could easily brew.

Three. I've written about sport for many years and I'd never come across a genuine friendship between former teammates or opponents that had lasted so long. This was different to, say, long retired former tennis players I knew who renewed acquaintances once a year over a bottle of red in the private restaurants of Wimbledon. Dave had known Eric longer than he'd known his wife Jackie (putting that into context, Dave and Jackie first met in April 1957). They were the kind of natural pals who didn't need an occasion to bring them together. I spoke to several of my peers in the sports writing fraternity and they couldn't think of anything like it either. As far as I, and seemingly everybody else, could work out, theirs appeared to be the firmest, most enduring friendship in elite British sport. Which, by and large, is why I decided to write a book about them.

So what makes Eric and Dave so different to everybody else? "I think



Eric (fourth from left, middle row) and Dave (fourth from right, middle row) in a Brighton team line-up for the 1958/59 season

we were cut from the same cloth, Dave and me, and I don't just mean in terms of being goalkeepers," says Eric, who started his career with Charlton Athletic during the late 1940s. "He's a lovely guy and Jackie has always been a lovely wife. He also cares about people. The one thing I really don't like to see in this world is injustice, and I think Dave feels very much the same way. I don't like it when people are browbeaten or lose out through no fault of their own. You almost want someone to come along and say, 'No, that's unfair, that's not going to happen,' but of course life doesn't work like that. I've been lucky, but a lot of people suffer from awful bad luck. You get some where nothing ever seems to go right for them. That, for me, is a tragedy. I do care, yes, and Dave does too. It's in his nature. The more people who cared, the better off we'd all be."

"Eric showed me the way, not just as a goalkeeper but as a person," adds Dave. "I wanted to be like him. He was a lovely man. He still is a lovely man. And Ida was a lovely woman too. I used to think to myself, *If I ever meet someone, I'd like it to be just like it is with Eric and Ida*. And when I met Jackie, it was. What's more, Jackie and Ida hit it off from the start as well, which only made things easier. Our friendship has been like a marriage really. Although we didn't speak for some time while I was at Newcastle, he's always been there for me, just as I hope I've always been there for him. As soon



Eric receiving his Army Cup winners medal from King George VI while he was doing his National Service in 1950

as we moved back to the Brighton area, the first person to ring was Eric. That's true friendship."

Eric isn't wrong when he mentions the crucial part that luck has played in his story. Take, for instance, the time when a German parachute mine drifted down out of the night sky and came to rest yards from his family's front door in London NW1. Twenty-five seconds after making contact with the ground, parachute mines were primed to detonate, laying waste to anything in their immediate vicinity. Except this one didn't detonate.

That's not to say, though, that Dave (who grew up in relatively rural Surrey) got off lightly during the Second World War. "One afternoon my elder brother and I were playing in the back garden and this plane, a German one, came over low and started firing its guns," he recalls. "All of a sudden my Auntie Kath came running out, grabbed hold of the two of us and pulled us inside to safety. I think he was getting rid of all his bullets before flying out over the English Channel back to wherever he'd come from. That was pretty hairy. Well, it was more than that, I realise now. I think we were pretty near to death there."

Luck may also have played its part in terms of the position Eric and Dave occupied on the football field. Given their ages (92 and 85 respectively), you could argue they remained oblivious to the issue of dementia in football until fairly recently because, well, all bar a couple of their former teammates are now dead. Dementia in football only came to light in the

21st century. A fair percentage of Eric and Dave's cohort never even got to see the year 2000. Both men played in the one position on the football field where you rarely head the ball—that of goalkeeper. Coincidence? Maybe. Maybe not. Both did suffer concussions, not to mention various breakages, so it's not as if they came away entirely unscathed.

Luck. A good wife or partner. Exercise. They, in Eric and Dave's considered opinion, are the holy trinity when it comes to living long, largely happy lives. "In my time, I've had both—a wife and a partner—and they've been wonderful," says Eric (Ida, his wife, died in 2012). "It just takes all the worry away. Find a good one, in other words."

It just so happens that Eric met his current partner, Irene, while out exercising. Or, to be more exact, playing bowls, the sport Eric and Dave both took up once their footballing days were over.

"Bowls is very social, but it's also about competing, no matter who you're up against," says Dave.



Dave playing for Newcastle United

"Oh yes," agrees Eric. "Always got to win, me. Always. But Dave's right—you meet some lovely people playing bowls. We're not running out in front of thousands of people every week anymore, but we're still having fun. And we're still competing." ■

Eric & Dave—A Lifetime of Football and Friendship by Spencer Vignes is published by Pitch Publishing, priced £18.99 in hardback

Songs Of The Sea

On a good day, blue whales can hear each other underwater from up to 1,000 miles away

Humpback whales can learn songs sung by other pods, which last up to 30 minutes

Scientists have recorded fish singing a dawn chorus, just like birds, on Australian coral reefs



How Sir Geoff Hurst provided for his family

WITH EQUITY RELEASE

BY *Megan Williams*

Borrowing against your property can help you achieve your financial goals. The Reader's Digest Equity Release team sat down with 1966 football legend Sir Geoff Hurst to discover more about his own journey with the UK's most popular equity release product.

If you're unfamiliar with equity release, it's the process of borrowing against the value of your home to release tax-free cash. The UK's most popular equity release product, and the option that worked for Sir Geoff in early 2021, is a Lifetime Mortgage.

Sir Geoff, however, is clear from the start that he didn't have any concerns about releasing equity, insisting, "I felt really confident. I didn't have any apprehension about it." He laughs at my surprise that such a huge financial decision didn't prompt at least a little reluctance; it's clearly a response he's had from loved ones, too. "My family always think I'm positive. [My wife] is cautious. I'm probably a bit more 'let's do it'. That's my general attitude anyway."

It's understandable that his wife had

For more information about how equity release could help you, visit:
www.readersdigest.co.uk/er2
Or call 0800 029 1233

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some reservations. Equity release will reduce the value of your estate and could affect entitlement to means-tested benefits. Although there are customer-facing safeguards in place to ensure transparency and high levels of conduct amongst providers and lenders, it's important for homeowners to be fully informed about the potential risks.

Was there anything particular that his wife was concerned about? "It was a fair amount of money and quite a big commitment. But I chatted to her a bit about it, over a period of time. In some cases, when we have big decisions, she worries about it, and she's proved to be right. This time we pursued it and then we moved on."

Family is clearly incredibly important to Sir Geoff; in fact, it's family that prompted his decision to release equity in the first place. "I've got 'the mob'", he tells me solemnly, leaning across the table and counting on his fingers. "The wife, the children, grandchildren... son-in-law... dog," he cracks a wide smile and leans back. "My generation all feel the same, they feel they want to help their kids and grandchildren to any extent that they can do so."

Hurst is evidently an advocate for gifting an early inheritance and lights up when he speaks about his family. "Who needs the money when they're 70? They need it when the kids are growing up, he chuckles. Being able to pay for the little things while he can watch them enjoy it has been the real pleasure of Sir Geoff's experience. "Take my middle granddaughter," he offers, "she's 13 and enjoys the dance and drama and that costs money. If I wasn't in a position to [finance] that, I'd be pretty disappointed."

"My wife's got a very large hammer and two nails. That keeps my feet firmly on the ground!"

Sir Geoff pulls out his phone and begins showing me photos. His grandson at a football event. His daughters clambering on his back as grinning children. His wife, watching from the stands as a young Hurst scores for England. He's incredibly proud of the family he's built. It must be nice for him to see the effects of his financial support? "Brilliant, of course, to see them enjoy it. Every single thing. It's the whole life, the whole family. Helping with the house, the interior, the driveway. It goes on and on." He rolls his eyes, "On and on. But it's nice to be in a position to do it."

Hurst's wife accompanies him on most of his trips around the UK and when Sir Geoff leaves our meeting, it's to meet her for a coffee. This is an almost daily ritual for the couple, who married in 1964. Despite being a world-famous footballer, Hurst has managed to stay remarkably grounded, putting his family above all else. With trademark humour, he lets me in on his secret. "My wife's got a very large hammer and two nails. That keeps my feet firmly on the ground!" ■



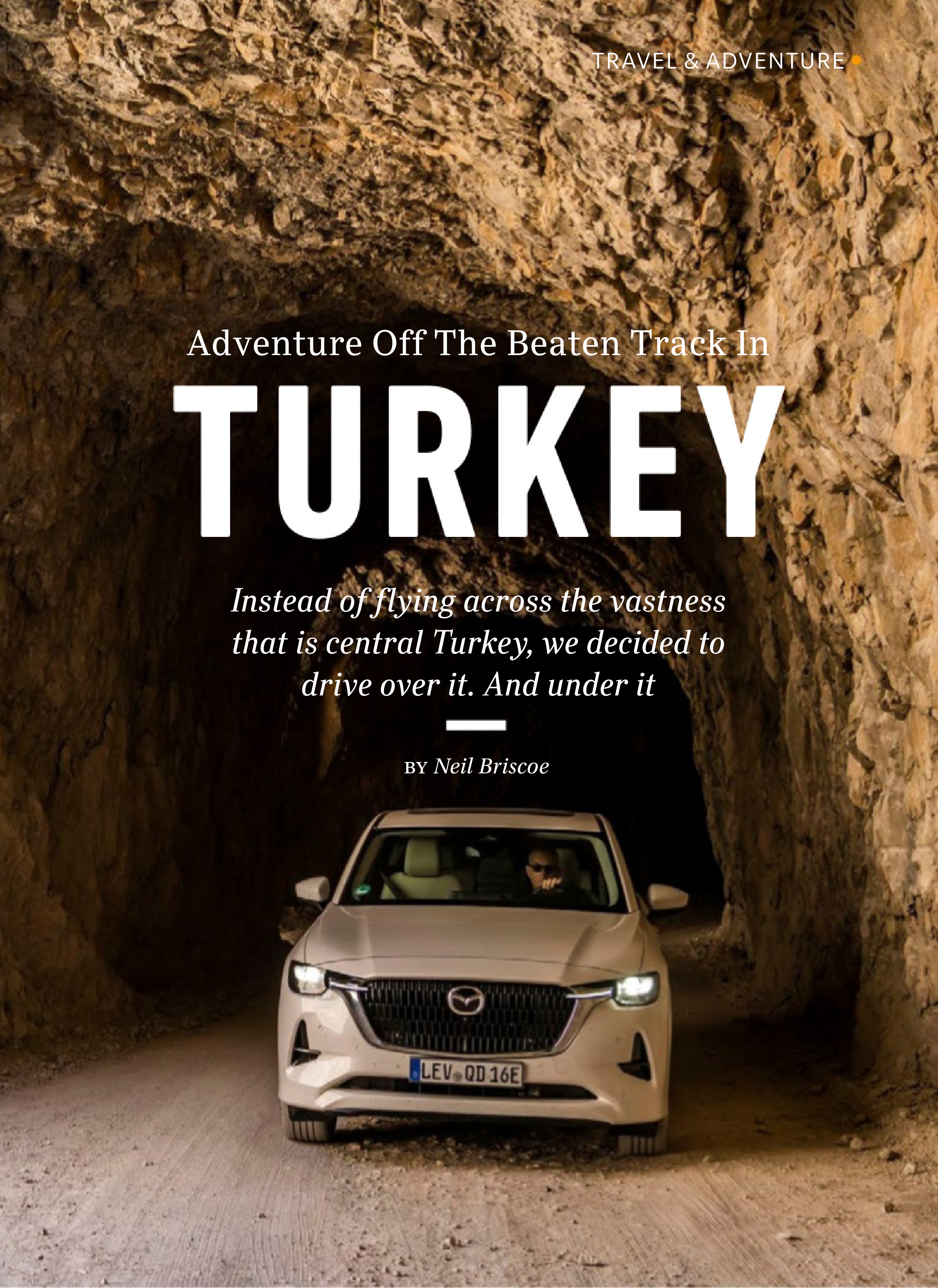


Adventure Off The Beaten Track In

TURKEY

Instead of flying across the vastness that is central Turkey, we decided to drive over it. And under it

BY *Neil Briscoe*



By the time the flat-bottomed car ferry chugged away from the quayside, I could already feel the sun beginning to turn my skin a faint shade of pink. We had started the morning in driving rain under glowering skies, but down here, on the dusty plains, the sun was beating down and the temperature was up past 30°C.

The riverine breeze was welcome, but this was no ordinary body of water. The broad, slow-flowing river we were crossing was the Euphrates, one of the great waterways of antiquity and along whose banks recorded history effectively started. These days, the Euphrates is probably better known for flowing through areas of warfare and strife, but here, in the middle of Turkey, all is (relatively) peaceful. Certainly it was peaceful on this warm and sunny day, with the light sparkling off the water.



Alexander the Great crossed this same river on his way to conquer the known world, but our objective was a bit less ambitious. We were simply heading for an overnight stop on our way to the city of Ürgüp, where the houses are partially built into the rocky cliff faces and the famous hot air balloons fill the skies over the region of Cappadocia each morning.

We could have got there a lot quicker than this. After all, Istanbul is only about a four-hour flight from London, and a connecting flight to Nevsehir—just a short drive from Ürgüp—takes only a little over an hour. That would have been too easy, though.

Instead, we started our travels in Trabzon. Clinging to the damp and verdant Black Sea coast, Trabzon is some way off the normal tourist trail in Turkey. In fact, we were told that we were the first Europeans to visit the area all year, and that was in September. If you've not been to Trabzon, however, Trabzon has definitely been to you—70 per cent of the tea used by Lipton is grown here, while the area also produces huge amounts of the hazelnuts which go into Nutella. We were in Trabzon for neither tea nor chocolate spread. We



Turkey's hair-raising Derebasi Turns

were in Trabzon for the mountains. Inland from the city, the vast peaks of the Pontic mountain range pierce the bottoms of the scudding clouds. We wouldn't be flying, but we'd be climbing a substantial fraction of airliner cruising height, and to get there we'd be taking one of the world's most dangerous roads.

That's actually how the Turkish tourist authority sells the D915 that runs from near Trabzon to the far side of the mountains, attracting motorised tourists from all over, especially the intrepid motorbike brigade. There's one particular section, known as the Derebasi Turns—100 kilometres of twisting, switchback gravel road that winds its way up Mount Soganli. Looking at it from the bottom, it seems as if a picture postcard Swiss valley has decided to come over all rugged and adventure sports. The road clings vertiginously to the sides of the mountain, 29 hairpins and not a metre of guard rail between them, climbing 300 metres in just five kilometres of driving at one point, and peaking at 2,300 metres up.

You'd assume that we'd be driving some sort of monster truck up here, a massive Land Rover with knobbly tyres, winches, and vast panniers of equipment stored on the roof. Nope, we were actually driving a humble family Mazda. The new Mazda CX-60 is an SUV, right enough, but it's very much an urban car with its plug-in hybrid engine and low-slung chassis. You wouldn't think it was the right



sort of car to be tackling this kind of terrain in.

And you'd be wrong. Perhaps it's not just Mazda, perhaps it's just that all modern cars are over-engineered for what they need to do, but the CX-60 took to the Derebasi Turns as if born for the job. It does have four-wheel drive, which helped when finding purchase on the loose gravel, and the fact that the rear wheels are electrically driven meant that they could be more precisely controlled when grip was scarce.

The only problem was that some of the turns were so tight that we couldn't get around them with one swing of the steering wheel. We'd have to back up and take a second bite at the corner, and that meant backing up towards the edge of the road, which makes for quite the view from the reversing camera. Maybe not one you'd really want to see, though...

Thankfully, on the far side, the road becomes a tarmac one again and sweeps back down to sea-level. Not that there's much sea here. Instead, the landscape changes dramatically from a replica of the Swiss Alps to more like the centre of Spain, albeit on a bigger schedule. We charge across a vast landscape, a tiny dot making its way to the banks of the Euphrates. Locked up in busy corners of the British Isles, you tend to forget that there are such vastnesses out there, but they're not as far away as you might think.

Having crossed the Euphrates once, the next day we had to do so again, but this time there would



be no ferry involved. Instead, we crossed a narrow bridge and drove into a tunnel, one that looks as if it might have inside it a door to someone's house.

What the tunnel actually houses is a road, and it's a road that took a very long time to build. This is the Stone Road, and it runs from the Kemaliye out to the broader plain of Anatolia and the wider world. Way back in 1870, the locals demanded that such a road be built, to render their homes and their businesses less remote from the rest of Turkey. At first, those local people took it upon themselves to dig, pick, and shovel rock out from under the Munzur mountains to create a quicker way in and out. Support from the Turkish government was sporadic, though. Or perhaps I should say Turkish governments, because the Stone Road took quite some time to complete.

In fact, it was not fully open for use until… 2002. Entire empires rose and fell in the time it took to complete the 8.7km of the Stone Road. The road—covered in a dusty grey limestone and peppered with tyre-threatening rocks—cuts its way under the mountains and above the edge of the Euphrates, which is now narrower than it was when we crossed by ferry, and far, far below us. The canyon the Stone Road traverses is said to be the second biggest in the world, after Arizona's Grand Canyon, but then there are others who make that same claim so take it with something of a pinch of salt.

The tunnels break through the faces of the mountain in places, to



It was local people who made sure that the Stone Road was built to connect remote communities to the rest of Turkey

run for a few metres in fresh air and daylight before plunging back into the darkness again. On one of these occasional emergences, we stop for a moment. The silence is almost total. As our ears accustom, we can hear the faint gurgling of the river, many metres below us, but that's it. Everything else is utterly quiet. Given the topography, it looks and feels as if you have wandered onto the set of a *Star Wars* film in those few silent seconds before George Lucas calls, "Action!".

It is, unquestionably, one of the most beautiful places to which I've ever been. If you were on a plane, you'd probably not even glance out of the window as you flew over it, but down here at ground level (technically lower than that in places…) it is as dramatic and stunning a slice of the planet as you'll ever find.

What added to that drama was the fact that, for extended stretches, we could drive on pure electric power. Turkey is short of places to stop and charge up an electric car, but our Mazda CX-60 steed was a plug-in hybrid, so coasting down those steep roads to the valley floor was enough to put some charge into the battery. Driving through the tunnels of the Stone Road, with the petrol engine switched off, and the only noise the crunching of our tyres on the chalk-white floor, was both eerie and addictive. It also proved that you really can get into and out of a stunningly remote part of the world in a manner that's at least slightly more environmentally efficient.



It didn't hurt that, once we'd left the tunnels and were back on rough-and-ready tarmac, the CX-60's cabin was soothing and comfortable, verging on luxurious. Adventure doesn't have to mean wearing a hair-shirt, metaphorically speaking…

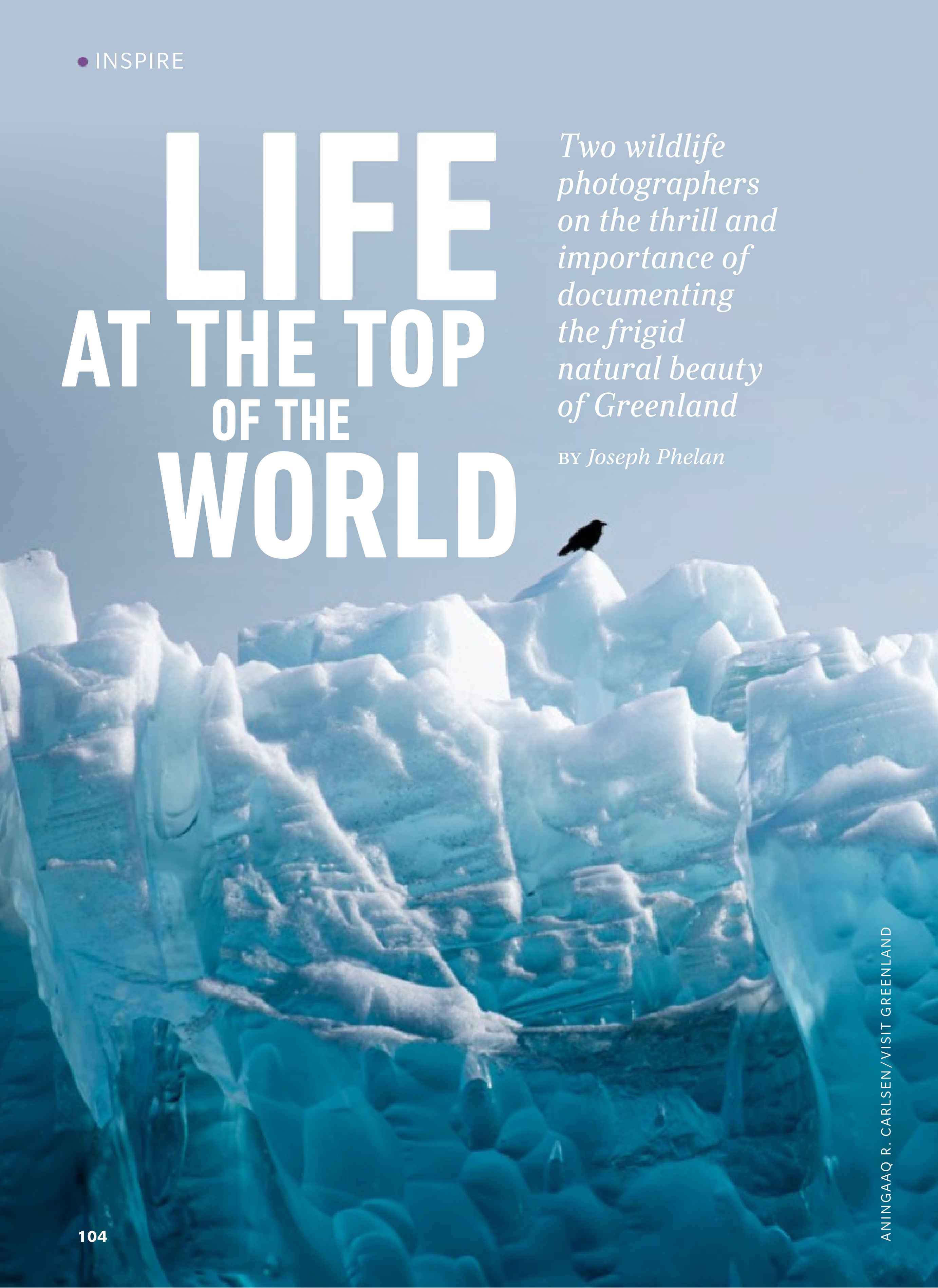
The landscape changes again as we leave the Stone Road and head up towards Ürgüp. As we come out of the mountain range, the land opens dramatically up into a VistaVision shot straight out of the John Ford directors' playbook. It all looks incredibly like the distant west of the US, at least until you spot that the locals are mostly driving decrepit old Renaults and Tofas-built Fiats, rather than vast pickup trucks. We spy whirling dust devils—mini tornadoes of dirt—at the side of the road, and park for a time at what seems like the loneliest bus stop that could ever be, in the middle of a small hamlet with endless emptiness stretching out on ever side.

By the time we reach Ürgüp and its remarkable buildings, constructed atop and within Bronze Age caves, the appearance of other European and American tourists comes as a shock. We'd become so used to being so far off the normal holiday trail that we'd forgotten what crowds and noise were. Perhaps it was better that way. Perhaps it's just better to forget the connecting flight, and to just get out there and explore a country up close. It may take longer, and the going may be tougher, but it's worth it. Adventure awaits, even when you're driving a perfectly ordinary family car. ■

LIFE AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD

Two wildlife photographers on the thrill and importance of documenting the frigid natural beauty of Greenland

BY *Joseph Phelan*



ANINGAAQ R. CARLSEN/VISIT GREENLAND



MAGNUS ELANDER/VISIT GREENLAND

GREENLAND IS A wild, hostile place. It's isolated, cold and sparsely populated: it spans two million square kilometres, making it the world's largest island, but is home to just 60,000 people. It's a landscape that is simultaneously stunning and barren, with around two-thirds of the country sitting within the Arctic Circle, and 80 per cent of it blanketed with ice.

At first glance Greenland seems far from hospitable; it's a frigid world of ice caps and glaciers, mountains and permafrost, and boasts the coldest temperature ever recorded in the northern hemisphere (-69°C). Yet, despite the island's undeniably testing conditions, it's far from empty. In fact, hosts of species are not only surviving in Greenland—they're thriving.

From sea eagles to reindeer, Arctic foxes to polar bears, hooded seals to walruses, Greenland and its surrounding waters are inhabited by an array of incredible wildlife. They have evolved to be able to deal with extreme cold, limited vegetation and long, dark winters; December days in Greenland rarely see the sun for more than four hours.

It should, therefore, come as no surprise that despite Greenland's fauna being abundant, it isn't necessarily easy for humans to observe. Most species are illusive and wily; they are cautious, wary of their surroundings and unwilling to do anything that could put them in harm's way. What's more, the island is so vast that if an animal is determined to remain out of sight, there's no shortage of hidey-holes for them to retreat to.

For a certain type of intrepid photographer, these hurdles, coupled with the island's serenity and remoteness, makes Greenland both the ultimate work environment and the most challenging.

"The landscape is a dreamscape, with rugged mountains and glaciers, calving icebergs and fjords," says Magnus Elander, a Swedish photographer with a passion for capturing the natural world. "It's a getaway place to meditate. To appreciate not sitting in traffic jams at home. To me, it's like being on another planet."

This is a perspective echoed by Thrainn Kolbeinsson, an Icelandic photographer and filmmaker who specialises in landscapes, and has recently become obsessed with shooting the majesty of Greenland's great outdoors.

"It's a visceral experience being out in bad weather and difficult conditions," Kolbeinsson says. "I naturally become more present and more immersed in every moment. You feel more awake and alive when doing anything in such environments. The landscapes and the sceneries [of Greenland] are obviously incredible,


A hooded seal peeks above the waves

and even though I come from Iceland, I have never experienced views like it."

While Greenland is, for both Elander and Kolbeinsson, a draw in and of itself, it's the country's collection of wild, often snow-dappled animals they regard as the country's primary allure. Being able to photograph these creatures against an untamed Greenlandic backdrop is, both men admit, something that is able to entice them time and again.

"Wildlife and nature are both intrinsic parts of life in Greenland. In a way, I feel it's almost like a window into our past as a species. We're so used to our warm houses, fast food and TV on demand, that we kind of forget that it hasn't always been this easy. Greenland really embraces the basic and more natural ways of living. To me, that's what makes their nature so special," says Kolbeinsson.

Elander fully agrees. "When I take pictures of wildlife in these high Arctic environments, it's the background setting that really makes the image," he says.

While numerous species are flourishing in Greenland—such as the planet's most genetically isolated polar bear population, which was documented for the very first time in 2022—there is one particular marine mammal that is truly blossoming: the seal. Greenland's seal population outnumbers its human one by more than 310 to one. Seals have long prospered for two key reasons; there are relatively few people to hunt them, and the ocean waters contain plentiful supplies of fish such as capelin, Arctic cod and polar cod.

Research suggests that the harp seal, a common feature on the Greenlandic coastline, is faring particularly well, but that could be set to change due to the impacts of climate change. Research published in the journal *Nature Climate Change* in 2020 concluded that, if it continues to melt at its current rate, the Arctic could be free of sea ice by 2035, meaning 7.5 million harp seals will lose their home.

AQQA R. ASVID/VISIT GREENLAND


Walruses on an ice floe

readily admit that they are fortunate to be doing so while surrounded by spectacular, changeable, entirely novel vistas.

Elander says that while it's difficult singling out a particular animal he most enjoys photographing, he would, if pushed, choose the majestic walrus, partly owing to a particular encounter that was, at the time it occurred, far from stress-free.

"We were out in our kayaks and, out of nowhere, we were being accompanied by two inquisitive walruses. They surfaced and snorted very close to our fragile boats. At times they were only some 20 feet away. We were anxious since the beasts were just as big as the kayaks and weighed a ton or more. They could easily have capsized our boat. Walruses are not normally predatory animals, but the thought of being overturned in the icy water, and the sight of their long tusks, made us decide to move towards shallower water and go ashore to study them at a safe distance through binoculars.

"Walruses are ugly, red-eyed animals with a constantly running nose. They burp and fart loudly, and they are clumsy on land. But I think

Greenland is, as has been well documented, on the climate change frontline. Over the last two decades it has lost around 4,700 gigatons of ice, which some estimates suggest would provide enough water to cover the entire United States in a 1.5-foot-high carpet of water. While many of Greenland's native species are managing well right now and have yet to feel the full effects of a warming planet, they will undoubtedly start to suffer in the coming decades if global carbon emissions are not reduced soon.

This looming environmental disaster, one could argue, makes photographing and recording animal species a vital endeavour, not only so as to be up to date on the tangible effects of climate change, but also for posterity. People like Elander and Kolbeinsson are performing a vital, indispensable service, but both

MAGNUS ELANDER/ VISIT GREENLAND

they are cute, and underwater they are swift and move like torpedoes," Elander adds.

Kolbeinsson, meanwhile, confesses that there's a particular land-based mammal he favours, and it's one he'd been dreaming of photographing for years before finally getting the opportunity. "Inspired by Ragnar Axelsson, a legendary Icelandic photographer, one of the things I was the most excited for when going to Greenland was meeting the Greenland sled dog," he says. "I had heard the wildest stories of their extraordinary feats in some of the most difficult conditions on Earth, saving themselves and their owners when everything seemed hopeless.

"Even though they live in close proximity with humans, I wouldn't say they're fully domesticated," he adds. "I didn't really feel afraid around them, but they have a powerful presence. I had two encounters with them while in Greenland and all it did was make my interest even greater."

Elander says that, as well as giving him the opportunity to take remarkable photographs, his trips to Greenland have also provided unique experiences that he will always treasure. "Highlights include travelling by dogsled with inuits from Siorapaluk [a tiny settlement in northern Greenland] in early February for a walrus hunt," he recounts. "We were out on the pack


Dog Island

ice and watching the first sunrise of the year at -45°C. We were all dressed in seal skin boots, polar bear pants and a reindeer parka.

"I also spent summers in Myggbukta, an abandoned Norwegian weather station [on the coast of Eastern Greenland]. We had herds of muskoxen roaming around the house all the time, and on two occasions, we saw white Arctic wolves sniffing at the front door."

For Kolbeinsson, Greenland simply embodies the essence of why he decided to become a photographer. The chance to come face to face with some of the world's least accessible animals, all the while enduring biting winds and sunless days, is, he says, what makes him love his job. "It's the story that comes out of it, and the fact that you had to work hard for what you got," he says. "For me, stories of struggles and difficulties naturally catch my attention." ■

THRAINN KOLBEINSSON/VISIT GREENLAND

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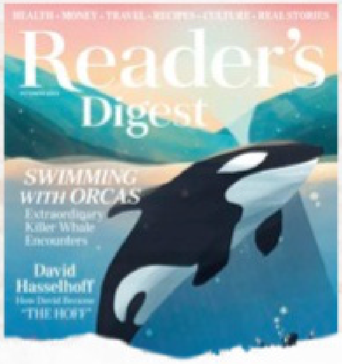
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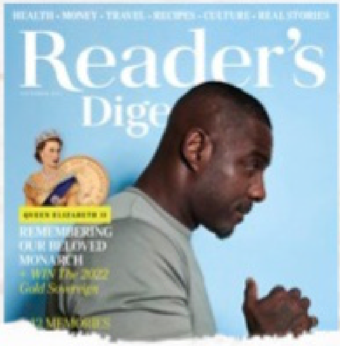
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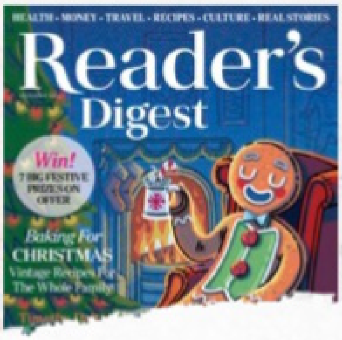
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My Great Escape:

To Be Beside The Seaside

Our reader Luke Ithurralde from County Durham heads to the coast



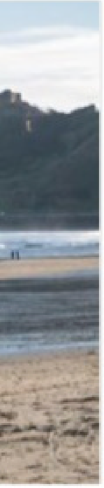
SCARBOROUGH HAS BEEN on my holiday wish list for a long time, so, following months of travel restrictions during the pandemic, I couldn't wait to book a family staycation in Britain's original seaside resort, with its rich history and scenic views.

Our first calling point was the delightful Peasholm Park. Situated in Scarborough's North Bay, it was named the UK's sixth Best Park and 25th favourite in Europe in the Trip Advisor Traveller's Choice Awards. A leisurely Sunday afternoon stroll was the perfect start to our trip. It features a lovely boating lake with striking dragon and swan-themed pedalos, a stunning waterfall and even a wishing well. The friendly and tame squirrels that roam the park, who will eat nuts from your hand, took me aback. The park is especially magical at night, as we discovered walking back to our hotel later that evening.



The next morning, feeling refreshed and with a hearty breakfast in our stomachs, we began our trek up to Scarborough Castle. It's quite a walk to the attraction, especially when you're confronted with wind and rain,







but it's totally worth the journey. I enjoyed exploring the remains of the castle, which includes an Iron Age settlement, Roman signal station, 12th-century castle and 18th-century battery. With information boards scattered around the site as well as audio guides, I could really immerse myself in 3,000 years of history. Not only that, but from the battlement viewing platforms you can indulge in dramatic coastline views overlooking the North and South Bays. On our final day in Scarborough, the sun was shining and we wandered along the sandy beach at North Bay, admiring our tranquil surroundings and spotting a group of surfers in the sea. After a long walk, where better to rest our tired legs than perching beside Freddie Gilroy? Freddie Gilroy and the Belsen Stragglers, an astonishing, giant sculpture created by Ray Lonsdale, depicts this former miner, who participated in the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, sitting on a bench in his old age.

My first visit to Scarborough was everything that I had hoped and more, reminding me that we have some beautiful holiday destinations right on our doorstep without needing to head abroad. I'll definitely return to Scarborough in the future, once I've seen the other delights Britain has to offer. ■

Tell us about your favourite holiday (send a photo too) and if we print it, we'll pay £50. Email excerpts@readersdigest.co.uk

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DE POEZENBOOT
Amsterdam



Cat lover? Sucker for an animal sob story? Then you'll love *De Poezenboot*.

The Catboat, as it translates, is moored on Singel canal's northern bank, just ten minutes' walk from Amsterdam's Centraal Station and terminating Eurostar services. Open to visitors, this volunteer-run barge provides shelter for 50 stray or abandoned cats of all types and sizes. Fourteen of those felines are permanent residents, with the remainder available for adoption.

Reckoning to be the world's only floating cat shelter, De Poezenboot was established in 1966. Having discovered and housed a homeless cat family, late founder Henriette van Weelde soon became known as the "cat lady" to locals, who brought her more strays. Soon unable to host every pussycat in her house, van Weelde purchased and refurbished an old sailing barge for the purpose. That original was replaced in 1979, with van Weelde sadly passing away in 2005.

Now a charity, De Poezenboot contains a large lower deck around which its furry inhabitants can pause, purr or pad as they please.

It's open to ailurophile visitors three days per week between 1 and 3pm, but you must reserve a slot online in advance. Although there's no admission charge, the boat relies on donations—hint hint—plus purchases made in a small gift shop. Profits go towards veterinary care, food, maintenance and the neutering of other Amsterdam cats with impecunious owners. Prospective owners should arrange a visit at other times. ■

By Richard Mellor



HIDDEN
GEMS

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These steps will help you get the best possible savings rate and earn some much needed extra cash.

Find the best rates

The first step is to look at what you're getting right now. If you've not moved your money for a while then it's likely you are on a poor rate. Even though some banks might have automatically increased their rates for existing customers, don't assume you can't beat them.

Compare what you're currently earning to what's available elsewhere. To find the best alternatives, I use the Moneyfacts website, and also provide updates on Be Clever With Your Cash.

Choose the right type of account

There are a number of different types of account so you need to decide which type best suits you. The most common are easy access savings accounts. These will usually pay less than other options, but you can withdraw your money whenever you want.

If you don't need to use your savings for long periods you could look at fixed bonds, usually running from six months to four or five years. Be careful of fixing for too long right now. Though you'll get much higher rates, your cash is locked away for the duration. And since we're expecting further interest rate rises, it could be that you miss out on better rates down the road. Of course, you need to balance that with getting a better rate right now.

Regular savings accounts are also worth considering for new deposits you make each month. You'll get a decent rate with some of these accounts, though often you can't access the money for a year.

The best rates might well be reserved for current account customers. That's not an issue as you will be able to open up these accounts even if you already bank



Andy Webb is a personal finance journalist and runs the award-winning money blog, *Be Clever With Your Cash*

elsewhere (it's fine to have more than one account).

Premium bonds are a different game altogether where a return isn't guaranteed. The more you save in them, the more likely it is you'll win a prize, but at current rates it's unlikely you'll beat the best paying easy access accounts.

Calculate if you'll pay tax

You might think that an ISA is best. Interest earned here is tax-free so you get to keep all of it. But if you're a basic rate taxpayer you'll be able to earn £1,000 tax-free in any savings account thanks to the Personal Savings Allowance (PSA). Higher rate taxpayers have a reduced allowance of £500, while additional rate taxpayers don't get one.



Any earnings above these allowances are what you pay tax on, so if you earn £1,050 interest in a year you'd pay 20% tax on the extra £50. You can avoid this by planning ahead and moving money into an ISA (though do compare if the ISA rate is better even when tax is taken into account).

As rates improve, your PSA will fill up faster, but for the time being they should remain big enough for most. One quick warning—if you fix and the interest is paid annually rather than monthly, the total amount will count towards that year's allowance. That will really add up for fixes of two or more years.

Check how to open and manage the account

Once you've decided on your new account (or more), it might seem like common sense to go for the one with the highest interest rate. But there may be restrictions that don't suit you.

It's likely the account will have minimum deposits that can range from £1 to £10,000, if not more. There will be maximums too. So you could be ruled out from opening these if you don't have enough cash.

Plus, many of the best-paying accounts are now online-only and some even require you to use an app. If you want to use a branch then you'll probably be looking at a lower rate.

Are you saving too much?

You want to avoid having more than £85,000 in any account as that's the limit protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. If you split money across banks, be careful here that these banks aren't part of a larger banking group that shares this amount across each of your accounts.

But really, £85,000 is likely too much to have in savings. For most of us, we only really need to have money available to cover any emergencies or for forthcoming large spends.

Above this, you really only need to have money for planned spending—anything from a new coat or a holiday to Christmas or a kitchen. You can even save these in separate accounts as many providers

THE RULE OF THUMB FOR THE EMERGENCY FUND IS TO HAVE THREE TO SIX MONTHS OF ESSENTIAL EXPENSES AVAILABLE

The rule of thumb for the emergency fund is to have three to six months of essential expenses available in case you stop earning, though you might be more comfortable with slightly more. Don't forget to factor in any increased costs on bills and mortgages. You'll want this to be in an easy access account so you can get hold of it immediately should the need occur.

will let you have more than one. If not, you can open up additional accounts with different banks.

If there are still substantial sums left over, then you're likely better off putting these into longer-term products like investments, your mortgage or your pension. In theory you should get better returns on money in these places—though there's the risk with some that the value of money you put in could fall. ■

Festive Film Facts

The first official Christmas film was a British short silent film called Santa Claus made in 1898. Directed by stage hypnotist, George Albert Smith, it showed Father Christmas decorating a children's bedroom and filling their stockings, before exiting up the chimney

The highest-grossing Christmas film is the mischievious family favourite Home Alone, with a lifetime gross of $285,761,243, followed by The Grinch at $270,620,950

It's A Wonderful Life's snowy scenes were actually filmed during a sweltering summer heatwave in 1946 California—it got so hot that director Frank Capra had to give the cast and crew the day off to recover from heat exhaustion



Stress-Free Christmas

How to keep your pets safe during the festive season

OUR PETS ARE part of the family, and of course that means that we want to get them involved in our Christmas celebrations too. But sadly every year the teams at Blue Cross' animal hospitals treat pets who have eaten or drunk something they really shouldn't have.

Here are some top tips to ensure you enjoy this festive season with your companion, and avoid any emergency trips to the vet.

Sharing Christmas dinner

For many of us Christmas dinner is the highlight of the season, but it's important to remember that certain foods can lead to illness, seizures and can even prove fatal for your pet.

If you're wanting to put together a pet-friendly bowl of food as a one-off treat this Christmas for your cat or dog, then you can include a small portion of any of the below:

- **Turkey meat** (no skin or bones)
- **Salmon**
- **Lamb meat** (no bones)
- **Scrambled egg**
- **Green beans**
- **Brussel sprouts**
- **Parsnips**
- **Carrot**
- **Peas**
- **Swede**
- **Mash potato** (best without additional butter)
- **New or sweet potatoes**

Festive foods to keep out of reach from your pet

- **Onions, garlic, leeks, shallots** and **chives** are toxic and can cause vomiting and diarrhoea and serious illness for your pet.
- **Chocolate** contains theobromine, a chemical that is toxic and can cause agitations, tremors and problems with the heart.
- **Mince pies** and **Christmas puddings** contain grapes and dried

fruits such as currants, sultanas and raisins that are highly toxic. Even small amounts can cause severe kidney failure. The artificial sweetener xylitol is found in lots of things including sweets, baked goods and peanut butter.

And finally...

To make sure your pet is having as much fun as you this Christmas, be wary of the following dangers:

- Plants like **poinsettas**, **holly**, **mistletoe**, **real Christmas trees** and **ivy** can cause upset stomachs.
- **Real or artificial Christmas trees** can be a hub for injuries if your cat likes to climb. Make sure your Christmas tree is placed in a heavy base and consider tethering to the wall. Hang decorations high up the tree out of reach for your pet. Be wary of **glass ornaments**, which can smash if they fall and break, and **tinsel**, which can be dangerous if swallowed by your pet.
- Avoid using **fertilisers** or **plant food** if your tree is potted. Many are toxic to cats, and of course some cats may happily use the pot as a litter tray!
- **Sharp pine needles** can also be dangerous for your pet so consider an artificial or non-drop variety of tree.
- If your pet is prone to chewing, then **Christmas lights** can pose a real danger. Cover any wires with plastic or cardboard tubing and switch off the lights when you're not around. ■

READER'S DIGEST'S PET OF THE MONTH



Email your pet's picture to readersletters@readersdigest.co.uk

Dexter

Age: 2
Breed: Cavapoochon
Owner: Alison Bruce
Fun Fact: "He's possibly the world's most loving dog who demands attention from everyone he comes across. He's even got a girlfriend, Heidi, and his own Instagram, @dexter_thecavapoochon"



Baking For The Holidays

For the final issue of our celebratory 100th-anniversary year, we're sharing some classic baking recipes from the RD vaults



Serves: *16*
Preparation time:
40 minutes plus
1.5–2 hours resting time
Cooking time:
60–70 minutes

Ingredients:

- **125g sultanas** (golden raisins)
- **2 tbsp rum**
- **150g butter,** plus extra for brushing
- **400g plain (all-purpose) flour**
- **½ tsp salt**
- **125ml milk**
- **14g dry (powdered) yeast**
- **60g white (granulated) sugar**
- **1 tsp vanilla essence** (extract)
- **4 eggs and 2 egg yolks**
- **50g glacé (candied) cherries,** cut in small pieces
- **55g each of blanched almonds, candied orange peel and candied lemon peel,** finely chopped
- **105g apricot jam**
- **125g icing sugar**



Panettone

The yeast dough for this Italian specialty is unusually runny, which makes the cake all the more moist and light. Mini-panettone can be baked successfully in muffin pans

Method:

1. Use a 22cm (8½in) springform tin. Soak the sultanas in rum for about 20 minutes until they become plump. Melt the butter and allow it to cool.
2. To make the dough, place flour and salt in a mixing bowl and pour butter around the edge. Heat milk until lukewarm, stir in yeast, sugar, vanilla essence, eggs and egg yolks and add mixture to the bowl. Knead dough for about 5 minutes with the dough hooks of an electric mixer or by hand.
3. Work glacé cherries into the dough with the almonds, candied peel and drained sultanas. Cover with a cloth and leave in a warm place to rise for 40 minutes.
4. Grease springform tin thickly with butter. Fold a double layer of baking (parchment) paper into a 30 x 35cm (12 x 14in) strip and make into a ring using a paper clip. Press ring around the inside of the tin to increase its height.
5. Beat dough vigorously with a wooden spoon, cover and let it rise again for 10 minutes. Preheat oven to 200°C (400°F, gas mark 6). Place dough in the tin. Cover and leave to rise until it is almost the height of the baking paper ring.
6. Bake panettone on the lowest oven shelf for 60–70 minutes until brown; brush with soft butter 2 or 3 times during cooking. After 30 minutes, check that the top is not browning too fast; cover with baking paper, if necessary. The cake is cooked when a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean.
7. Remove from the oven; leave to cool for 5 minutes. Place on a wire rack and loosen the side of the tin. Leave to cool completely. Remove paper and tin just before serving. Warm and strain the jam and brush over the cake. Combine icing sugar and lemon juice and spread lightly over the panettone.



Christmas Stollen

Stollen is shaped with tapered ends and a ridge down the centre, symbolising the infant Jesus in swaddling clothes



Method:

1. Soak the sultanas and currants in rum for 20 minutes. Drain in a sieve. Stir the yeast, sugar and 60ml milk in a bowl. Leave to rise at room temperature for 15 minutes.
2. Place 500g flour in a bowl. Make a well in the centre. Place sugar, salt, lemon zest, almond essence, spices and melted butter on top of the flour.
3. Pour the yeasty milk mixture into the well. Starting from the centre, work ingredients together. Add the remaining flour and knead dough vigorously until it is smooth and no longer sticks to the sides of the bowl. Add the drained sultanas and currants with the candied peel and almonds and knead to combine. Cover the dough with a cloth; leave to rise in a warm place for 1 hour.
4. Lightly flour a work surface. Knead and punch down the dough for about 10 minutes; it is ready when it feels elastic and is no longer sticky. Roll out the dough into a 35cm (14in) circle. Fold one side over to just beyond the centre to make the traditional shape.
5. Line a baking tray with baking (parchment) paper. Place the stollen on it, cover with a cloth and leave to rise in a warm place until it has increased by half its original size, both in height and in width. Preheat oven to 250°C (500°F, gas mark 9).
6. Place stollen in preheated oven. Reduce the oven temperature to 160°C (315°F, gas mark 2–3). Bake for 45–55 minutes.
7. Melt the butter in a small pan and brush it generously over the stollen while it is still hot from the oven. Dust thinly with icing sugar and allow to cool completely. Wrap in foil and store for 2–3 weeks. Sift a thick layer of icing sugar over the top before serving.

Serves: 18

Preparation time: 40 minutes plus 1.5–2 hours resting time

Cooking time: 45–55 minutes



Ingredients:

- **310g sultanas (golden raisins)**
- **115g currants**
- **2 tbsp rum**
- **10g dry (powdered) yeast**
- **2 tsp sugar**
- **250ml lukewarm milk**
- **750g flour, plus extra for kneading**
- **120g white (granulated) sugar**
- **Pinch of salt**
- **2 tsp finely grated lemon zest**
- **6 drops bitter almond essence** (extract)
- **Pinch each of ground cardamom and ground nutmeg**
- **250g butter, melted**
- **95g candied lemon peel,** finely diced
- **100g ground almonds**
- **60g butter,** for spreading
- **Icing sugar,** for dusting

Fruity Mince Pies

These traditional Christmas favourites are delicious served hot with cream. This version has an unusual iced topping that is baked on



Method:

1. Use 20 tartlet tins. Sift the flour into a bowl; mix in the ground almonds, zest and sugar. Rub butter into flour mixture until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Use a round-bladed knife and mix in the egg until the dough comes together. Gather into a ball; knead briefly on a lightly floured work surface until smooth. Wrap in cling film; chill for 30 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 200°C (400°F, gas mark 6). Roll out the dough very thinly; cut out 20 rounds 6cm (2½in) in diameter with a fluted cookie cutter. Gather the trimmings and roll again very thinly; cut out 20 rounds 8cm (3in) in diameter.
3. Place larger rounds in the tins. Fill with fruit mince; top with 1 tsp brandy butter. Brush edges of pastry with a little milk and place a smaller round on top of each pie, pressing the edges together to seal.
4. Brush the tops with the milk and make a hole in the lid of each pie. Bake in the centre of the oven for 25 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven, leave to cool in the tins for 5 minutes, then lift out onto a wire rack to cool for 10 minutes.
5. For the icing, whisk the egg white until frothy, then beat in the sifted icing sugar. Spread a little icing over the top of the mince pies and arrange them on a baking tray. Bake at 200°C (400°F, gas mark 6) for 5–10 minutes or until the icing has browned a little and the pies are heated through. Leave them to cool for about 5 minutes before serving.

Makes: about 20
Preparation: 40 minutes
Cooking: 35 minutes
Chilling: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

- **215g plain (all-purpose) flour**
- **80g ground almonds**
- **Finely grated zest of 1 orange**
- **2 tbsp caster sugar**
- **150g butter,** chilled and cut into small cubes
- **1 egg,** lightly beaten
- **About 550g fruit mince,** bought or homemade
- **125g brandy butter,** bought or homemade
- **2 tbsp milk**
- **1 egg white**
- **185g icing sugar,** sifted

Gingerbread People

Always a winner—especially at Christmas—and a dream to make. Decorating these delightful creations is almost as much fun as eating them

Makes: *about 20*
Preparation: *15 minutes plus decorating time*
Cooking: *15 minutes*

Ingredients:

- **125g butter,** at room temperature
- **115g caster sugar**
- **1 egg**
- **1 tbsp milk**
- **375g plain flour**
- **1 tsp bicarbonate of soda**
- **3 tsp ground ginger**
- **2 tbsp golden syrup or treacle icing and coloured sweets,** to decorate

Quick extra thrifty method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line two baking trays with baking paper.
2. Using electric beaters, beat the butter and sugar in a bowl until light and creamy. Add the egg and milk and beat until well combined.
3. Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda and ginger over the butter mixture. Put the golden syrup in a microwave-safe jug and microwave on high for 10–20 seconds, or until warm. Add to the butter mixture and stir until well combined.
4. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and gently knead. Roll the dough between two sheets of baking paper until 3mm thick. Using gingerbread men cutters, cut out shapes from the dough and place on the baking trays.
5. Bake for 15 minutes, or until golden and firm to the touch. Remove from the oven and leave to cool on the trays. Decorate as desired, using icing and sweets. Store in airtight containers.

Decorating tip: You'll find decorating sweets and easy-to-use tubes of coloured icing in your local supermarket.



State Of The Art: Barbara Hepworth

Anne Barlow, director of Tate St Ives and curator of Barbara Hepworth: Art & Life at Tate St Ives from November 26, 2022 - May 1, 2023 speaks to **Anna Walker**



What makes Barbara Hepworth's work special?
Barbara Hepworth was among a group of artists in the 1930s who pioneered the use of abstraction. Using direct carving rather than the more traditional technique of modelling, she developed a unique sculptural language, working primarily in stone, wood and metal. Over her lifetime, she created a vast number of works that ranged in scale from the intimate to the monumental.

Barbara Hepworth is one of the few women artists of her generation who received international recognition, exhibiting in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1950 and winning the Grand Prix of the Bienal de São Paulo in 1959.



How have the works in this new exhibition been selected? And do you have a favourite piece on show?
The exhibition contains sculptures and drawings from numerous public and private collections in the UK, and we selected works in close collaboration with the Hepworth Wakefield, where the show originated. For the Tate St Ives exhibition, we placed particular emphasis on the sections relating to Cornwall as well as Hepworth's interest in other fields including theatre, music and science, which we really wanted to highlight. For example, the show includes Hepworth's stunning costume and set designs for *Electra* at the Old Vic (1951), and *The Midsummer Marriage* at the Royal Opera House (1955), as well as the lead crystal

sculpture *Four Hemispheres* 1970 that was inspired in part by Hepworth's interest in space exploration and the shapes of satellite dishes at Goonhilly Satellite Earth Station.

How would you describe Hepworth's relationship with the area of St Ives? At the outbreak of the Second World War, Hepworth moved to St Ives and lived and worked there for the rest of her life. In 1949 she bought Trewyn Studio (now the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden) which became her workshop and studio, and subsequently her home. She later purchased the Palais de Danse, a former dance hall and cinema, and developed some of her largest sculptures there including Winged Figure for the John Lewis building in Oxford Street, London, and Single Form for the United Nations, New York.

The landscape of Cornwall was a crucial source of inspiration to Hepworth and references to it are evident in many of her works. The human figure and the landscape, and the relationship between them, was also a lifelong interest of hers.

Hepworth described St Ives as her spiritual home, and her presence can really be felt there—not only in the museum and sculpture garden, but also around the town as her sculptures can be found in the library, parish church, Guildhall and elsewhere, which is quite extraordinary. She was also an active member of the community, and in 1968 was awarded the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St Ives as an acknowledgement of her importance to the town.

What is your favourite little-known fact about Hepworth? And what do you personally find inspiring about her? Hepworth was always interested in the wider social and political issues of her time. She was also somewhat of an activist, campaigning on local issues in St Ives as well as acting as a sponsor for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.



I have a life-long love of her work and a deep respect for her commitment to realising her vision. In my role at Tate St Ives, I also find it inspiring to see how much Hepworth continues to attract the interest of younger generations of artists.

What do you hope visitors to the show will take away from the exhibition? For visitors who don't know Barbara Hepworth's career, I hope they will enjoy seeing the sheer beauty and power of her work, and for those who are familiar with her, I hope this show brings fresh perspectives and insights on this remarkable artist. ■

FILM OF THE MONTH



★★★★

GLASS ONION: A KNIVES OUT MYSTERY

RIAN JOHNSON'S follow-up to his 2019 murder-mystery *Knives Out* is another fiendish whodunit in that classic Agatha Christie mould. Daniel Craig returns as Benoit Blanc, "the world's greatest detective", who is invited to the private Greek island residence of a billionaire Elon Musk-like tech titan, Miles Bron (Edward Norton). Annually, Brom gathers his friends at this luxury hideaway, this year requesting the pleasure of their company to play a murder-mystery game—with him as the victim. But why is Blanc there, when he has no connection to any of the guests?

Among them, Kate Hudson is hilarious as a fallible fashion model while *Guardians of the Galaxy* star Dave Bautista flexes more than just his muscles as a YouTube star. Completing the circle is Leslie Odom Jr as a Bron-employed scientist, Kathryn Hahn as an influential politician, and Janelle Monáe as Bron's ex-partner. Soon enough, in Bron's "Glass Onion," a towering transparent abode, there will be a murder and more to solve.

Johnson has a fine old time lampooning the über-rich. Bron is part-hippie, part-hypocrite—the sort that is wealthy enough to lease the Mona Lisa from the French government to decorate his gaudy living room. The film smartly captures the idea of modern-day self-branding, as well as tapping into age-old themes of greed and larceny. With Craig on ragingly good form, this will tease your brain cells and tickle your funny bone in equal measure.

Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery is in cinemas on November 23

ALSO OUT THIS MONTH

★★★★

ARMAGEDDON TIME

THERE IS NO apocalypse in James Gray's coming-of-age drama, at least on the surface. But this semi-autobiographical Reagan-era tale will feel familiar to anyone who grew up in the Eighties. And even those who didn't will appreciate its sophisticated callbacks to a time of great change. It's all seen through the eyes of Paul (Banks Repeta), an 11-year-old Jewish lad from Queens, who lives with his highly-strung mother Esther (Anne Hathaway), his volatile father Irving (Jeremy Strong) and older brother Ted (Ryan Sell).

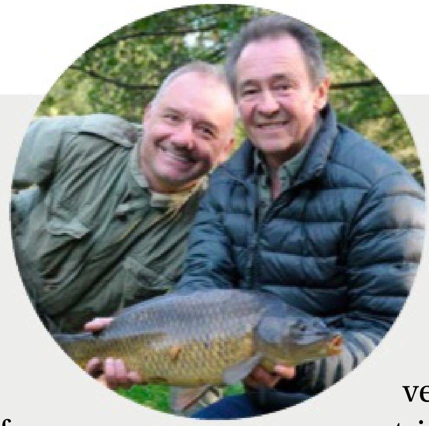
His closest relationship, however, is his grandfather (Anthony Hopkins), who takes him to the park to launch rockets and, better yet, gives him invaluable life advice. At school, Paul is drawn to trouble, especially when he befriends Johnny (Jaylin Webb), a Black boy from the poorer side of the tracks. Theirs is a friendship that will show Paul society's cruel realities; as his father tells him: "life is unfair, sometimes some people get a raw deal."

Some elements feel misjudged—not least a cameo by Jessica Chastain as Maryanne Trump, sister to the ex-President, who comes to Paul's school to give a motivational lecture to these "elite" pupils. The film's wider political context is fuzzier, perhaps because our attention is drawn to Gray's impeccable depiction of the rhythms of family life. The squabbles around the dinner table are beautifully captured, punctuated by moments of heartbreak and anger. *Succession* star Strong and Hathaway impress as the parents, but it's Hopkins who—yet again—will move you most with his dignified work.

Armageddon Time is in cinemas on November 18

By James Mottram





As this column reaches you amid the darkness of an uncertain winter, I thought I'd highlight the happiest half-hour of television I witnessed in 2022. I've written before about the restorative charms of ***Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing*** (iPlayer): the unforced camaraderie of its central celebrity pairing, its evident love of the British landscape, the careful attention paid to still-underdiscussed matters of male mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Even friends of mine with no real interest in fishing are bedazzled by it; it's comfort television par excellence.

After four seasons and two Christmas specials, we might have started to take these charms for granted. But episode five of series five was next-level bliss. What initially seems a routine assignment—pursuing carp and barbel amid the verdant Surrey Hills—generates a dream day (and buoying viewing) as an ecstatic Bob and Paul land three of the show's biggest ever catches (rest easy, vegans: the show operates a strict catch-and-release policy. Even canine mascot Ted is protected from the sun by a split-level parasol contraption that will send Betterware shares soaring).

Of course, as seasoned anglers will tell you, it's not really about the fish. What the series has brought into our living rooms over the past few years is fresh air, wildly good company, passing escape from the madness of modern Britain—and, most touchingly of all, the sight of two 60-something blokes choosing joy wherever the day takes them. My number-one wish for 2023 would be a red-button live feed of this pair messing around by the river while shooting series six—and many more hours of viewing happiness for us all.

by Mike McCahill



Retro Pick:

Catterick S1

(YouTube)

Mortimer's underrated one-series wonder from 2004, hinging on an unlikely sibling reunion. An all-star cast—Vic Reeves, Reece Shearsmith, Dora Bryan—and priceless daftness in every frame.



A Very Elvis Christmas

BROWSING THE OFFICIAL CHARTS' list of Christmas singles throws up some unique curveballs—remember when the mischievous public got Rage Against The Machine to No 1 in 2009? There's Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" too, and Pink Floyd's "Another Brick In The Wall (Part 2)". Unsurprisingly, all these are beaten to first place by Band Aid's "Do They Know It's Christmas?", which has sold nearly 4 million copies.

So who holds the title for the biggest Christmas album? In the 21st century, that accolade belongs to Michael Bublé's *Christmas*, but looking further back, beating Bublé by a fair mile is Elvis Presley.

Elvis' Christmas Album came out in 1957, only a year after he launched his eponymous debut. When he introduced his album to the press, Presley called it "a rock 'n' roll Christmas". Songs like "Santa Claus Is Back In Town" got a rhythm and blues treatment, while "Take My Hand Precious Lord" evidenced Presley's love for gospel. The conservative press, already horrified by Presley's erotic stage presence, were beside themselves about his Christmas album. *Time* called it "the most serious menace to Christmas since 'I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus'". To their mind, the holiday's Christian values simply did not go together with Presley's pop.

Nonetheless, *Elvis' Christmas Album* persists as the world's favourite festive record, proving that even at Christmastime, Elvis is king.

By Becca Inglis

Top 10 Most Streamed Christmas Songs

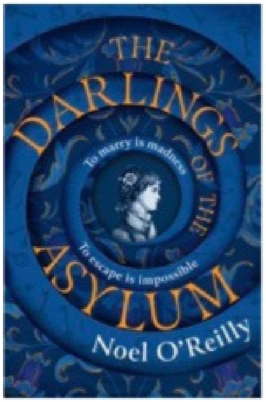
1. **All I Want For Christmas Is You** Mariah Carey
2. **Last Christmas** Wham!
3. **Fairytale of New York** Pogues ft Kirsty MacColl
4. **Merry Christmas Everyone** Shakin' Stevens
5. **Do They Know It's Christmas?** Band Aid
6. **It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like** Michael Buble
7. **Step Into Christmas** Elton John
8. **Santa Tell Me** Ariana Grande
9. **I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday** Wizzard
10. **Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree** Brenda Lee



December Fiction

A modern piece of Victorian-era gothic is our pick for a Christmas holiday read

The Darlings of the Asylum
by Noel O'Reilly
(HQ, £16.99)



AFTER THE AUTUMN RUSH, December is usually what's described as a "quiet" (ie, "rubbish") month for new novels. Somehow, though, *The Darlings of the Asylum* must have slipped through the net, because this a cracking piece of gothic fiction.

The narrator is 23-year-old Violet, a talented artist who dreams of making her own way in the world. The trouble is that it's 1886, when such dreams are seen not merely as selfish and unladylike, but as possible evidence of insanity. After all, her mother has lined up a nice rich man called Felix for her to marry. Unfortunately, Violet has taken a shine to the local bohemian Mr Lilley, whose racy ideas cause her to suddenly (and, let's face it, Freudianly) start painting "flowers with gaping ravenous mouths and upright poking stamens".

So it is that Violet turns Felix down—and not long afterwards wakes up in a lunatic asylum with no memory of what happened next. Worse still, the place is run by Dr Rastrick, who's all the more sinister for believing that he's doing good by weeding out women dangerous to society.

O'Reilly powerfully conjures up the nightmare of finding yourself stuck in an asylum, apparently for life, while still having your wits about you. Violet also writes about her fellow inmates with a convincing mix of sympathy and



James Walton is a book reviewer and broadcaster, and has written and presented 17 series of the BBC Radio 4 literary quiz *The Write Stuff*

horror—if sometimes perhaps striking a suspiciously 21st-century note as she battles the patriarchy.

And yet, the novel turns out to be more complicated, and ultimately more interesting than just another self-congratulatory reminder of how much better we are than those benighted Victorians. For one thing, Felix really is a nice man, happy to let Violet "scandalise my acquaintances with your opinions". For another, Mr Lilley mightn't be quite the feminist-friendly goodie he seems. And—whether because of the oppression she's suffered or not—Violet's sanity isn't necessarily as solid as she thinks either (although this doesn't mean she shouldn't be allowed to mess up her life as she sees fit).

Happily, as these questions bubble away, the book never forgets its story-telling duties. Instead, the narrative rattles along irresistibly all the way to its suitably gothic climax. ■

Name the character

Can you guess the fictional character from these clues (and, of course, the fewer you need the better)?

1. One Christmas, her Uncle Matthew buys her a dress with puffed sleeves.
2. Her surname is Shirley...
3. ...but she's usually known by the title of the book she first appears in, set in Prince Edward Island, Canada.

Answer on p142

A Choice of 2022's Best Children's Books

Who's Tickling Tilly?
by Rob Jones
(Pavilion, £6.99. Ages: 1-4)
A laughing dinosaur and a book that folds out to two metres. What's not to like?

Blow a Kiss, Catch a Kiss
by Joseph Coelho
(Andersen, £12.99. Ages: 4-6)
The new children's laureate with a collection of beautifully illustrated poems about everyday (young) life.

The Secret School Invasion
by Pamela Butchart
(Nosy Crow, £7.99. Ages: 7-9)
Relatable and very funny tale of an unwelcome school merger.

Dread Wood
by Jennifer Killick
(Farshore, £7.99. Ages 9-12)
A group of classmates stuck in detention are drawn into a properly scary horror story which also has plenty of laughs.

Friends Like These
by Meg Rosoff
(Bloomsbury, £12.99. Ages 12+)
Whether writing for adults or young adults, Rosoff is always shrewd, kindly and wise—and this tale of the joys and perils of female friendship is no exception.

RECOMMENDED READ:

A Ukranian Christmas

Our recommended read shows how much this Christmas in Ukraine has in common with the very first yule...

IN UKRAINE, Christmas comes but twice a year: December 25 and January 7. That's because of the country's position—often to its great cost of course—on the border between Western Europe and Russia, with their historically different calendars and historically different forms of Christianity (Western and Orthodox).

As a result, this charmingly illustrated book ranges more widely than the title might suggest, discussing customs from all across the continent, up to and including the strange British taste for Santa's grottos in department stores. Not surprisingly, though, there's little doubt which side of Europe the authors prefer.

As they point out, under Soviet rule Christmas was banned in Ukraine altogether. And even now that it's back in Russia too, they clearly don't think much of their Eastern neighbour's Yuletide ways, where carols are barely sung and nativity plays regarded as unacceptably Western (in Ukraine, by contrast, nativity plays have long been used for political purposes, with Herod represented in former times by Stalin and these days by Putin).



Nonetheless, the book's tone is essentially celebratory, proud of how Ukraine has blended together various Christmas influences from elsewhere, while also establishing traditions of its own. These traditions, we're told, "are deeply rooted in the country's history of sorrow, courage and resistance", not least at a time that is "not so different from the very first Christmas" when Judea was under occupation by a bullying empire.

Here, for example, is what happens in the build-up to what seems to be the bigger of the two big days, where Western Advent is replaced by

something more sombre. And, should you want them, the recipes for most of the dishes mentioned are given in the book…

"The Christmas Fast begins on 28 November and lasts until 6 January. During this time, Christian believers follow a kind of vegan diet: no animal products are permitted (although on certain days fish is allowed) and the meals consist mainly of vegetables, porridge, beans and mushrooms. It's also forbidden to dance, sing or organise parties, including weddings. This is a time for the preparation of one's heart: an opportunity to focus on what's important, drawing strength and joy from the anticipation of Christmas.

On the last day, 6 January, it's customary to commemorate the hardships of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem by not eating anything until the first star appears. If the winter is snowy, children, who are allowed only a light snack, go sledging until they notice the first star. They then rush home, with cheeks red from the frost and fun, full of excitement for Christmas Eve.

Dinner on Christmas Eve is known as the Holy Supper. It's a symbol of communion and care for each other, with the whole family gathered around one table, and meals served not as individual portions, but placed in the middle of the table in painted earthenware dishes and passed around with a smile. This is the last day of the fast, so all meals are prepared from foods without dairy products and meat. There should be twelve dishes. This number, too, is symbolic: the twelve months in a year, the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve apostles.

There is no mandatory list of dishes, but, traditionally, there should be kutia (a sweet grain pudding with poppy seeds), uzvar (a fruit drink) and pastries. Other dishes traditionally prepared are borsch with dumplings, mushroom soup, varenyky (half-moon shaped dumplings) stuffed with potatoes or stewed cabbage, holubtsi (cabbage rolls), pickled herring, roasted carp, stewed beans and jellied fish.

On a table covered with an embroidered tablecloth, there will be one plate more than there are people in the house. This ritual is observed in memory of deceased relatives, but also as an invitation to any lonely strangers who might pass by in need of shelter and community. The floor

A Ukrainian Christmas *by Nadiyka Gerbish and Yaroslav Hrytsak is published by Sphere at £16.99*



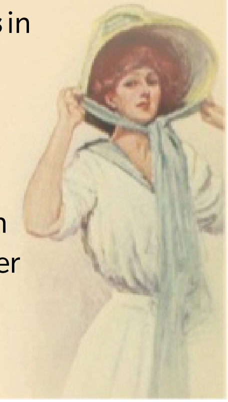
is covered with hay as a reminder of the humble conditions in which Jesus was born.

There is a lavish variety of recipes for even the most traditional dishes. Ukraine, covering approximately 600,000 square kilometres, is a beautiful patchwork of different backgrounds. The traditional kutia is made with wheat. However, writer Lyuba Yakimchuk, originally from the eastern Luhansk region, says that kutia in her parents' house was made with rice. Now that same house is under occupation.

Whatever the differences, the dishes are made from scratch, have rich flour and a deeply rooted history. By the way, the unmarried girls in the family are forbidden to lick the makohin (pestle), used to crush the poppy seeds in the makitra (clay mixing bowl). There is a superstition that if a girl licks from the makohin, her future husband will be bald—but most girls don't care. ”

Answer to Name the Character:

Anne of Green Gables in the novels by L M Montgomery. That first book remains among the bestselling ever (its huge popularity in Japan explains the large number of Japanese tourists in Prince Edward Island).



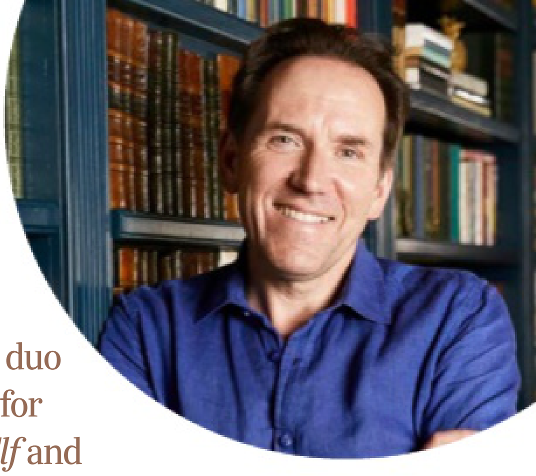
From The Foreword To *A Ukrainian Christmas*

"The war between Ukraine and Russia is also a war for the freedom of Christmas culture. Christmas, especially during wartime, can make the impossible happen. Enemies on both front lines can reconcile for a short time and although examples of military Christmas reconciliations might be rare, the fact they have happened gives us hope and the chance to imagine peace. They encourage us to be optimistic that these one-time military truces might have a lasting effect after the war, but only if those modern-day Herods—Hitler, Stalin, Putin—disappear for good.

Christmas is a time that reminds us that justice and love prevail, even when it seems that both are slowly dying. It ensures the indestructibility of hope in times of the greatest hopelessness. For as long as we celebrate Christmas, we can neither be defeated nor destroyed. This is the message that Ukraine is trying to convey to the world, and this is what our book is about."

Books

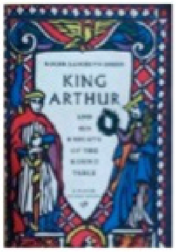
THAT CHANGED MY LIFE



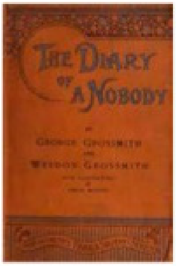
British actor Ben Miller is one half of the comedy duo Armstrong and Miller, as well as a prolific writer for children. His new books, *Secrets of a Christmas Elf* and *The Night We Got Stuck in a Story*, are available now

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King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table by Roger Lancelyn Green

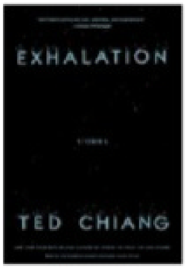


I loved reading when I was little. I think that's the reason I love writing for children. My parents were both English teachers, and our home was full of books. Dickens was a family favourite. But the book that really fired my imagination was ***King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table*** by Roger Lancelyn Green, which my father read to me at bedtime when I was around 12. Ogres, damsels and enchantment—what more could you want?



Diary of a Nobody by George and Weedon Grossmith

I'm a fool for a classic, and I'm so glad I finally stumbled across ***Diary of a Nobody*** by George and Weedon Grossmith. It began life as a serial in ***Punch***, with text by George and illustrations by Weedon. Put simply, it's the funniest book I've ever read, and the template for so many brilliant first-person narratives like ***Adrian Mole*** and ***Bridget Jones***. The short pitch is that it follows the social climbing of a London clerk, Charles Pooter, but of course it's so much more than that, poking fun at all things middle class. I ripped it off mercilessly—ahem, it greatly inspired me—for my own comedic opus, ***Secrets of a Christmas Elf***.



Exhalation by Ted Chiang

It's never too late to have your life changed by a book, and it happened to me again recently when I read Ted Chiang's ***Exhalation***. Ted Chiang wrote ***Story of Your Life***, which inspired the sci fi alien-visitation classic ***Arrival***. I love that too, but each and every piece in ***Exhalation*** is its match in imagination and execution. If there are super-intelligent aliens in the galaxy seeking to communicate important truths, Ted Chiang may well be one of them.

The Out-Of-This-World Plan That Could Make "No Service" A Thing Of The Past

No reception may soon be a distant memory, says James O'Malley

IF YOU'VE EVER pulled out your phone in a rural area, you'll know that it can be a frustrating experience. Will the website load? Will you be able to send that message? Or maybe things are even worse: do you have enough signal to call for help?

Despite our phones being critical to our lives, not all phone signals are distributed evenly. According to Ofcom, network coverage of the UK landmass ranges from around 79 to 86 per cent. This means that if you hike up a mountain, or take a wander through the wilderness, you might be really stuck if disaster strikes.

And that's why an announcement made by Elon Musk's rocket company SpaceX and American phone network T-Mobile recently blew my mind a little.

Way back in January 2021 I wrote about how SpaceX is building StarLink, a new "mega-constellation" of broadband internet satellites. Since then, the company has continued to launch hundreds and hundreds of new satellites, and today for a mere £89 a month, it's possible to receive speeds of between 90 and 200Mbps almost anywhere on Earth. That's about as fast as a lower-end home broadband package—but with no ground-based phone masts or transmitters required.

The problem with this system though is that to connect your phone or computer to it, you need a bulky satellite dish on top of your house—think something roughly similar in size to a Sky TV satellite dish. Which doesn't make it very practical for taking on your hike.

But now the company says it has come up with a solution. Working with T-Mobile, the company says that it plans to try and put what are effectively normal phone transmitters onboard StarLink satellites.

If they can make this work, it will be a big deal. Because until now, any sort of communications with satellites has required additional hardware (like a massive dish), so that signals can be sent long distance using special satellite communication frequencies. Instead, this proposed system will use the

same cellular signals that phones ordinarily use.

This means that instead of needing to buy a new phone or a special gadget to make it work, or even needing to install a special app, it will just work as normal with the existing phone in your pocket. As far as your phone is concerned, the mobile signal receivers inside won't know that the phone mast it is connecting to is orbiting above in space—it'll connect to it in exactly the same way as if the transmitter was on top of a nearby hill.

Behind the scenes, the tech to make it all work will be quite complex. In addition to needing to launch thousands of new satellites (by no means an easy thing to do!) the orbiting transmitters will also need to correct for the Doppler effect, which is the phenomenon where the frequency of waves changes over long distances—much like how an ambulance siren will sound different as it drives past you.

And the transmitters on the satellites will have to be powerful enough to work over a much longer range, as StarLink satellites orbit around 340 miles above the Earth—significantly more than the 45 miles that the longest range ground-transmitters have to work within. But Elon Musk has claimed that the company has already got the technology working "in the lab".

If/when the system does launch, it will take a number of years—my guess is between three and five years for the initial service. And the expectation is that, at least at first, connections will be very limited.

For example, you may be limited to only using certain approved messaging apps or making old-fashioned voice calls. And don't expect to be posting videos to Instagram from the top of Ben Nevis just yet, as there won't be enough bandwidth for more, at least at first.

But if SpaceX and T-Mobile can make it work, the implications for the system could be world-changing. Communications will become truly democratised, as rural communities in Britain, or indeed the rest of the world, could find themselves able to stay in touch more easily. And maybe one day aeroplane mode will no longer be a thing, as we will be able to stay connected throughout flights.

If the system works, it could mean a future in which we will never lose signal again. ■



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My sister-in-law is trying to lose some weight but lacks enthusiasm for fitness.

However her husband is very enthusiastic about encouraging her. He even bought her a Fitbit watch so she could count the steps she did in a day.

One day my husband met his nephew (her son) at the park playing tennis with friends. He noticed he was wearing his sister's Fitbit. When he got the chance to talk to his nephew, he noticed him looking at it quizzingly, and explained he gives it back to his mother at the end of the day so she can show his father.

DEE COLWORTH, *Huntingdon*

After hearing about second hand September, and friends loving second hand clothing apps such as Depop and Vinted, I downloaded the apps and jumped on the bandwagon.

Scrolling through my recommended items feed, a jumper

caught my eye. I clicked on the listing and noticed that my sister had also liked the same item. I hadn't realised my sister was also on board with the idea, so I went onto her profile to see what she liked, only to find she was selling items of clothing.

The majority of the items had been sold, and it didn't take long for me to realise that she'd been selling my clothes—and making a pretty decent profit too!

In true sisterly fashion, when I asked her about her entrepreneurial skills, she said, "What's mine is mine and what's yours is mine." I am yet to receive some form of commission.

AMY ANDREWS, *Cumbria*

A friend of mine was getting overwrought about turning 70 years of age on her next birthday.

Trying to placate her, her husband said, "Just think of yourself of being circa 21 in Celsius."

LIZ TUBBY, *Norfolk*

In my early primary teaching career, I worked in a very large Victorian building with long dark corridors and endless doors.

My class of six- and seven-year-olds knew that on this particular day it was my birthday. I was presented with some lovely gifts including fruit, chocolates and birthday cards.

One little girl, who was a particularly shy and sensitive pupil with reading difficulties, wanted to give me a homemade card and asked how to spell my name. I thought, *how lovely* and suggested she go outside into the corridor where she would find my name on the door and could carefully copy it down. She seemed a little confused but tiptoed out with her pencil and card.

She was gone for quite a while but eventually returned with a smile and shyly handed me the folded card. What it revealed was a colourful drawing of me and the words, "Happy Birthday Boiler Room—Keep Out".

I took a deep breath and whispered to her, "Thank you so much. What a beautiful card and a lovely picture of me."

It made her day—and mine! That was over 40 years ago and remains one of the loveliest and funniest memories of my teaching days.

ROBERT SMITH, *Dorset*



"THIS YEAR I WOULD LIKE EVERYBODY TO BE VEGAN! "

CARTOON BY *Guto Dias*

TRIVIA

BY *Beth Shillibeer*

1. What are the only creatures known to navigate using the light of the Milky Way?

2. How many items are indicated by the phrase a “baker’s dozen”?

3. One of Paddington Bear’s two birthdays is December 25. When is the other?

4. What element, dissolved by rainwater, gives turquoise gemstones their blue hue?

5. The JW Marriott Hotel in Shanghai’s Tomorrow Square features the world’s highest what?

6. What is the only country in the world to have an amphibian as a national animal?

7. A 50-year conflict over Hans Island in the Arctic was resolved between Canada and which country in 2022?

8. What 16th-century art form evolved into pantomime, clowning, and other forms of slapstick?

9. What mythical creature is called Melusine in Luxembourg, Iara in Brazil, and Mami Wata in African folklore?

10. In Australia, the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and the opening cricket Test match in Melbourne both happen on what day this month?

11. What universal adaptive process is now estimated to happen up to four times faster than previously thought?



12. Our sense of taste is lowered by 30 per cent in the air, giving airplane food a bad reputation. True or false?

13. When Benedictine monk Guido of Arezzo invented the word “gamut,” what subject was he referring to?

14. Who wrote “A quiet and modest life brings more joy than a pursuit of success bound with constant unrest” on a piece of stationary that eventually sold for more than $1 million?

15. Which religious ceremony inspired Leonard Nimoy’s Vulcan salute in an early *Star Trek* episode?

Answers: 1. Dung beetles. **2.** 13. **3.** June 25. **4.** Copper. **5.** Library. **6.** Panama (golden frog). **7.** Denmark. **8.** *Commedia dell’arte*. **9.** Mermaid. **10.** December 26. **11.** Evolution. **12.** True. **13.** Music theory. A “gamma-ut” was the lowest note in Western medieval music. **14.** Albert Einstein. **15.** Jewish priestly blessing.

PHOTO: ©GETTY IMAGES

IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

Our language is full of terms and expressions related to time, which structures our lives and occupies our minds—especially when we're running late. Take a moment now to test your vocabulary

BY ROB LUTES

1. **serotinal**—A: extremely tardy. B: of late summer. C: on a fixed schedule.

2. **fortnight**—A: two weeks. B: 40 days. C: four nights.

3. **coeval**—A: very young. B: of the same age. C: from the period prior to the Middle Ages.

4. **ephemeral**—A: lasting for a brief time. B: hourly. C: concerning the final years of life.

5. **vespers**—A: the sixth of the Christian canonical hours, occurring at dusk. B: time at sea. C: the longer months of the Gregorian calendar.

6. **preprandial**—A: before fall harvest. B: before dinner. C: before there were written records.

7. **cosmic year**—A: the distance travelled by light in one Earth year. B: the time it takes for the sun to orbit the centre of the galaxy. C: unit of time used in describing the history of the universe.

8. **summary**—A: slow. B: at high noon. C: without delay.

9. **chronometry**—A: the science of accurate time measurement. B: the art of telling time by the sky. C: the mechanics of clockmaking.

10. **hodiernal**—A: according to the body's internal clock. B: at the same time every day. C: relating to the present day.

11. **thitherto**—A: soon. B: within the time required to travel from one place to another. C: until that time.

12. **genethliac**—relating to: A: free time. B: the position of the stars at one's birth. C: old age.

13. **erstwhile**—A: future. B: former. C: current.

14. **protracted**—A: of excessive length. B: from time immemorial. C: happening over a 24-hour period.

15. **acronical**—A: occurring at sunset. B: crossing many time zones. C: pertaining to winter.

Answers

1. serotinal—[B] of late summer. The *serotinal* seed pods drifted on the breeze, and Nicolas sensed the coming autumn.

2. fortnight—[A] two weeks. Keahi had allotted himself a *fortnight* to tour the Maritimes, but now he wished he'd planned for a third week.

3. coeval—[B] of the same age. The house and the willow in the yard were *coeval*, the tree having been planted by the original builder.

4. ephemeral—[A] lasting for a brief time. The young nation was unstable due to a succession of *ephemeral* governments.

5. vespers—[A] the sixth of the Christian canonical hours, occurring at dusk. The altar was perfumed with incense at *vespers*.

6. preprandial—[B] before dinner. Anya put the casserole in the oven and took her *preprandial* stroll around the neighbourhood.

7. cosmic year—[B] the time it takes for the sun to orbit the centre of the galaxy. The *cosmic year* is about 225 million terrestrial years long.

8. summary—[C] without delay. Margot's second-rate presentation to the board of directors earned her a *summary* dismissal.

9. chronometry—[A] the science of accurate time measurement. The development of the atomic clock was a major advance for *chronometry*.

10. hodiernal—[C] relating to the present day. Absorbed in the *hodiernal* demands of his art, Randy rarely planned for the future.

11. thitherto—[C] until that time. Chef Karoli popularised a unique blend of American and Asian cuisine that had not *thitherto* been tasted.

12. genethliac—[B] relating to the position of the stars at one's birth. After consulting a star chart, the local astrologer provided Kevin with encouraging *genethliac* information.

13. erstwhile—[B] former. The *erstwhile* friends had long since become bitter political rivals.

14. protracted—[A] of excessive length. The union knew it was in for a *protracted* dispute when the corporation refused arbitration.

15. acronical—[A] occurring at sunset. Watching the constellation Orion's *acronical* rising became a ritual during our family holiday.

VOCABULARY RATINGS
7–10: fair
11–12: good
13–15: excellent

Happy Holidays

Reader's Digest Competitions — Enter today for your chance to win!

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December 2022 Entry Form

Reader's Digest

Fill in all your answers below:
(enter as many as you like – one entry per competition per person)

Page 46 **Winter Wordwheel**

Page 62 **Prize Crossword**

Page 73 **Humax Aura**

Page 85 **Christmas Wordsearch**

Page 116 **Luxury UK Break**

Page 151 **Photo Finder**

Name:

Address:

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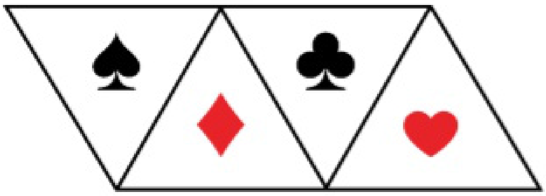
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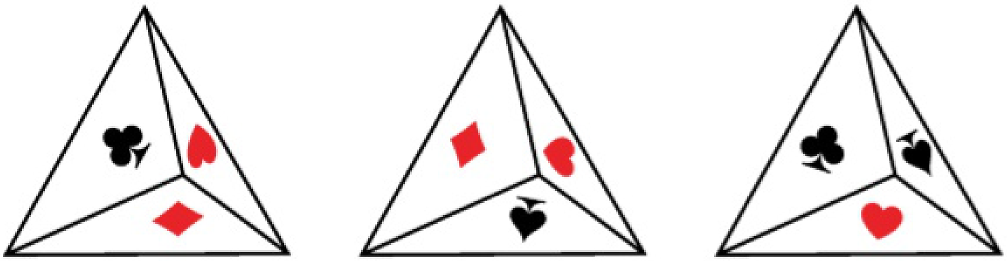
☐* I opt-in to be contacted by third party competition promoters about future offers and promotions (*please tick)

BRAINTEASERS

Prism Problem

DIFFICULT The flat template to the right can be folded into a triangular pyramid. Which of the views below represents the resulting pyramid?

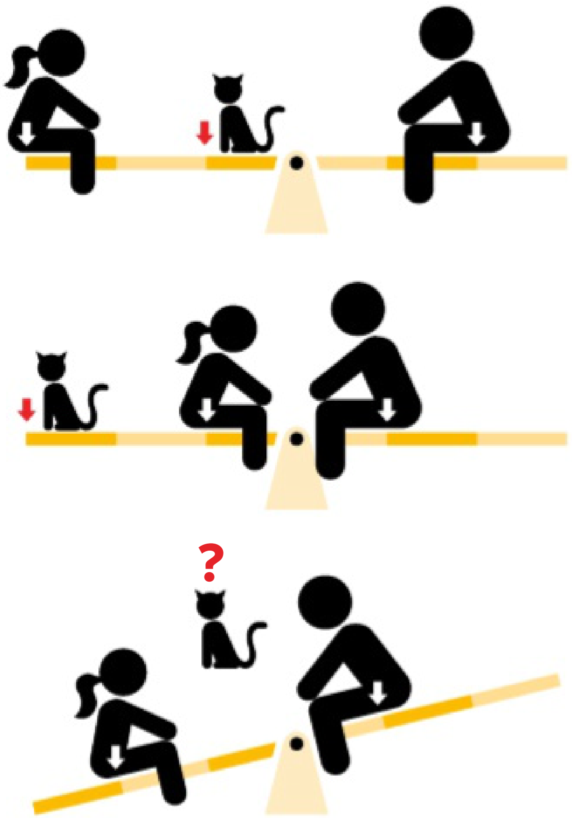




A B C

Seesaw

MEDIUM Andrew and his little sister, Anna, are on a seesaw. In the first two pictures, they are balanced because the amount of force they're applying to each side (with some help from their two-kilogram cat, Ginger) is the same. Assuming each colored section of the seesaw has the same length, where should the cat sit in the final picture to balance it?



PRISM PROBLEM (EMILY GOODMAN). SEESAW (DARREN RIGBY)

Christmas Calculation

EASY You and your friends are exchanging Christmas gifts. There are six people, including you. Each person will pick a name out of a hat, and you're hoping to draw the name of your best friend, Catherine. It's your turn to pick, and you've overheard that someone who picked before you drew the name of your other friend, Paula.

Under the rules of the exchange, if you draw your own name, you have to put it back. The odds that you'll pick Catherine's name are what percentage?



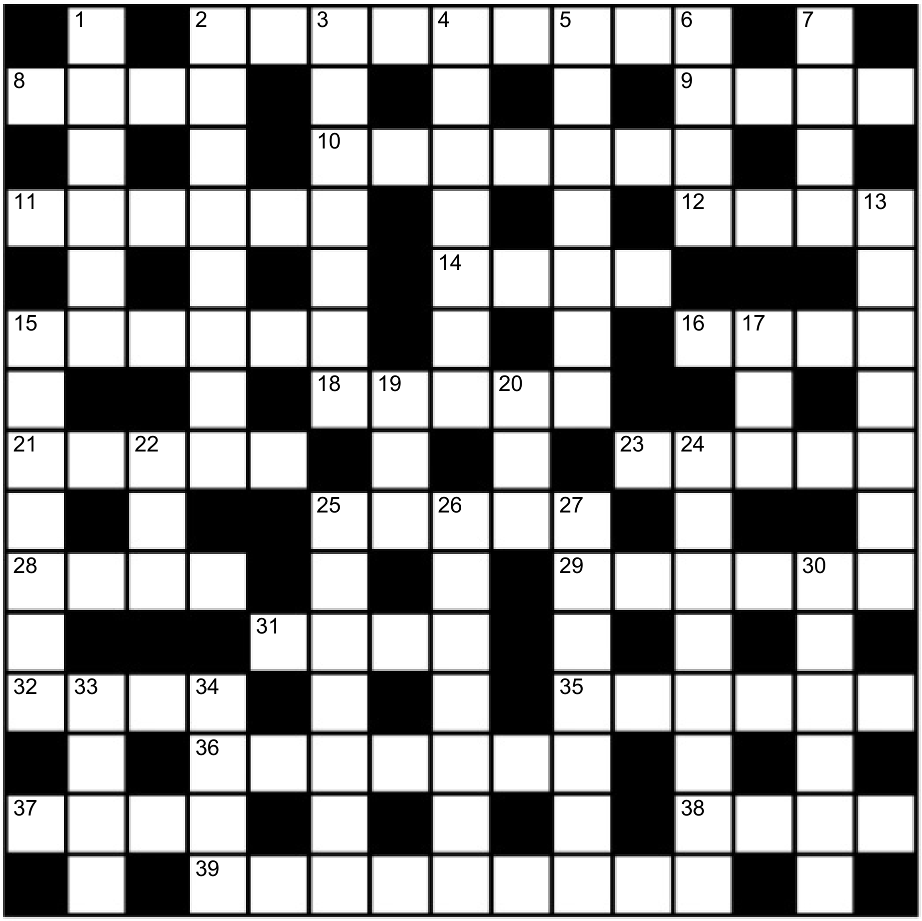
Pic-a-Pix (Hint: Secret Door)

EASY Reveal a hidden picture by shading in groups of horizontally or vertically adjacent cells. The numbers represent how many cells should be shaded in each corresponding row or column. (For example, a "3" next to a row represents three horizontally adjacent shaded cells in that row.) There must be at least one empty cell between each group. The numbers read in the same horizontal or vertical order as the groups they represent. There's only one possible picture; can you shade it in?

				2	3							
			1	4	4	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		10										
		9										
		8										
		7										
		6										
		5										
	2	4										
	2	3										
	2	2										
	2	1										

For answers, turn to **page 155**

SECRET SANTA (EMILY GOODMAN). PIC-A-PIX (DIANE BAHER). PHOTO (GIFTS): ©GETTY IMAGES



CROSSWISE

Test your general knowledge. Answers on p142

ACROSS

2 Laboratory glassware (4,5)
8 Entreaty (4)
9 Mesopotamia was here (4)
10 Middle East expert (7)
11 Useful kind of truck (4-2)
12 Employs (4)
14 Bombs (4)
15 American vulture (6)
16 Thickly curled hairdo (4)
18 More mature (5)
21 Bring together (5)
23 Have a taste (3,2)
25 Egyptian water lily (5)
28 Without purpose (4)
29 Kitchen feature (6)
31 Great Lake (4)
32 "Shane" actor (4)
35 Canter round a lure for bees (6)
36 Sticks like glue (7)
37 Sudden assault (4)
38 Rhythmic swing (4)
39 Gastric (9)

DOWN

1 Abnormally white (6)
2 Discussed (6-2)
3 "Walkin' back to Happiness" singer (7)
4 How critical things may come (2,1,4)
5 Conveyor (7)
6 If it's in place it's in this (4)
7 Charge per unit (4)
13 Darted (7)
15 Pivotal (7)
17 Not easily hoodwinked (3)
19 The fifth of twelve (3)
20 Flightless bird (3)
22 In poor health (3)
24 Attendance check (4-4)
25 Pitched abruptly (7)
26 Proposition demonstrated by reasoning (7)
27 Registers (5,2)
30 Not quite (6)
33 Small cells (4)
34 Shocking art movement (4)

BRAINTEASERS ANSWERS

Prism Problem

B.

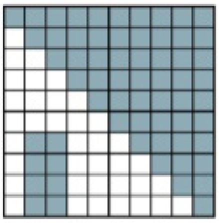
Seesaw

Ginger the cat should sit two lengths away from the pivot on Andrew's side.

Christmas Calculation

25 percent, or 1 in 4. There were six names in the hat to start. But you know Paula's name has already been taken out, and you can't pick your own name. That leaves four names, and you're going to pick one.

Pic-a-Pix: Secret Door



SUDOKU

BY *Jeff Widderich*

1		8		9	6	2		
3	9			4				6
	7					3		
			4					
	8						9	
					5			
		7					5	
5				8			1	4
		2	5	7		8		3

To Solve This Puzzle

Put a number from 1 to 9 in each empty square so that:

- every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numbers (1-9) without repeating any of them;
- each of the outlined 3 x 3 boxes has all nine numbers, none repeated.

SOLUTION

1	4	8	3	9	6	2	7	5
3	9	5	2	4	7	1	8	6
2	7	6	8	5	1	3	4	9
9	5	3	4	1	8	6	2	7
6	8	4	7	2	3	5	9	1
7	2	1	9	6	5	4	3	8
8	6	7	1	3	4	9	5	2
5	3	9	6	8	2	7	1	4
4	1	2	5	7	9	8	6	3

Laugh!

WIN £30

for every reader's joke we publish!

Go to **readersdigest.co.uk/contact-us**
or **facebook.com/readersdigestuk**

Does anyone know how to give up dressing like a pirate? I tried patches but they just made it worse...

Comedian GARY DELANEY

***The Exorcist* actress Linda Blair was** apparently a perfectly normal girl until Hollywood turned her head.

Comedian SANJEEV KOHLI

Fact from the 1970s: The New Seekers actually did try to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony once, but failed because Holland was too flat.

Comedian GLENNY RODGE

I bumped into an old friend at the antique store. He was buying a globe for his wife. It's a small world.

@_ENANEM_, *via Twitter*

I have been learning how to guess the weight of dogs. I picked up a few pointers yesterday.

Comedian OLAF FALAFEL

Do animals know that we wear clothes, or am I traumatising my cat every time I peel off my socks?

Seen on Twitter

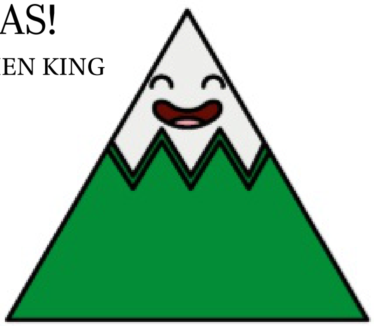
I recently saw a man standing on one foot at an ATM. I asked him what he was doing.

"Checking my balance," he replied.

Submitted via Facebook

Mountains aren't just funny, they're HILL AREAS!

Author, STEPHEN KING



I have a joke about trickle down economics. Ninety-nine per cent of you won't ever get it.

Politician DAVID LAMMY

My girlfriend said that if I continue pointing out the features of our house to her she would leave me.

I said, "Well, there's the door..."

Seen on Reddit

A wizard asked me to proofread one of his scrolls last week. Well, it was more of a spell check.

Submitted via Twitter

Why didn't the ghost take showers? Because it would dampen his spirits.

Submitted via email

My friend recently told me that I've been creating far too many graphs, but I don't agree.

I know where to draw the line.

Seen on Reddit



Close But No Cigar

THESE HILARIOUSLY OBVIOUS KNOCK-OFF PRODUCTS AREN'T FOOLING ANYBODY...

via boredpanda.com





A man asked a frog how to open a bag of crisps. The frog said, "Rip it".

Seen on Reddit

On our anniversary, I asked my wife why she married me all those years ago. She said, "Because you are funny."

I replied, "I thought it was because I was so good in the bedroom."

"See," she replied. "You are funny."

Submitted via email

My girlfriend asked me who my favourite vampire is.

I replied, "The one from *Sesame Street*."

"He doesn't count," she replied.

"Oh I assure you, he absolutely does."

WENDY SWIFT, *via email*

The Egyptians claim that there are no crocodiles in their country. But I think they're in de Nile.

@THEPUNNYWORLD, *via Twitter*

Yesterday I accidentally swallowed some food colouring. The doctors say that I'm OK, but I can't help feeling like I have dyed a little inside.

Seen on Reddit

A friend of mine wanted to be run over by a steam train. When it happened he was chuffed to bits.

Comedian TIM VINE

Text Fails

Twitter users share their funniest texting mistakes

@JakeWilliamsArt: I was texting my Deliveroo driver while impatiently waiting for my takeaway delivery and accidentally put "Wondering on EAT?" rather than ETA. He replied, "EAT SOON."

@SoulSto1: Took screenshots of a heated exchange with a friend and sent them to her instead of somebody else. I had to cover up my mistake by adding the follow up message, "Look at this, this is what our friendship has come to!"

@GumGumerson: My sister accidentally texted the family group chat instead of her husband, so now we know his nickname is "sugar buns".

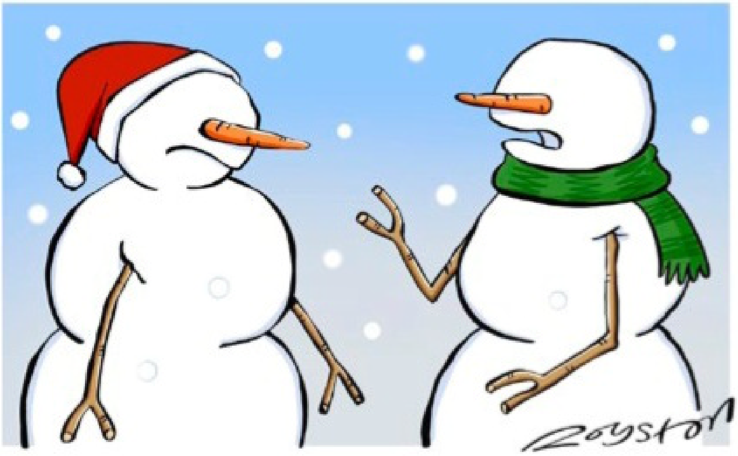
@LeneMachine25: I received a message recently that read, "Hi, is this April?" I replied, "No, it is December."

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Across: 2 Test tubes, 8 Plea, 9 Iraq, 10 Arabist, 11 Pick-up, 12 Uses, 14 Eggs, 15 Condor, 16 Afro, 18 Older, 21 Unify, 23 Try it, 25 Lotus, 28 Idly, 29 Island, 31 Erie, 32 Ladd, 35 Nectar, 36 Adheres, 37 Raid, 38 Lilt, 39 Abdominal

Down: 1 Albino, 2 Talked-of, 3 Shapiro, 4 To a head, 5 Bringer, 6 Situ, 7 Rate, 13 Scooted, 15 Crucial, 17 Fly, 19 Leo, 20 Emu, 22 Ill, 24 Roll-call, 25 Lurched, 26 Theorem, 27 Signs in, 30 Nearly, 33 AAAs, 34 Dada

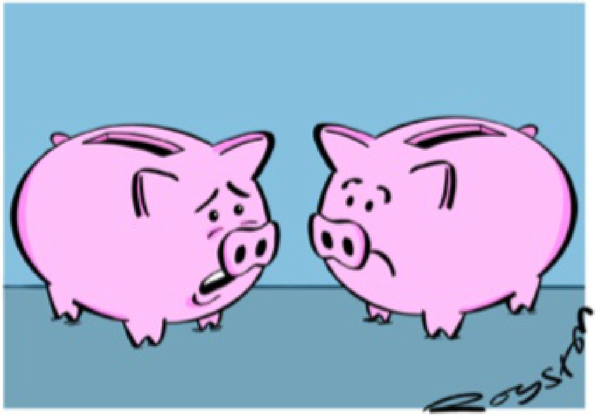
Beat the Cartoonist!



Think of a witty caption for this cartoon—the three best suggestions, along with the cartoonist's original, will be posted on our website in mid-December. If your entry gets the most votes, you'll win **£50**.

Submit to **captions@readersdigest.co.uk** by December 7. We'll announce the winner in our February issue.

OCTOBER WINNER



Our cartoonist's caption, **"I fear that painful times lie ahead."** failed to beat our reader Elaine Smith this month, who won the vote with her caption, **"Have you heard? Percy has had a card reader installed!"** Congratulations, Elaine!

CARTOONS BY *Royston Robertson*

IN THE JANUARY ISSUE



I REMEMBER...

Rosemary Conley

Eighties aerobics queen looks back on her childhood and becoming a home workout pioneer



CLIVE MANTLE: IF I RULED THE WORLD

The world according to the star of *Casualty* and *Holby City*

Boost Your Immune System

Seven science-backed solutions to help you feel your best

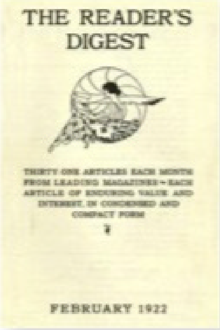
A Century Of Change

As we draw a close to our centenary celebrations, we find out which Christmas traditions are newer than you might think

WHETHER YOU THINK CHRISTMAS is a magical time of the year or find it overly-commercialised and overdone, you can probably agree on one thing: it seems to start earlier every year.

However, as fun as it is to grumble about this, it's not entirely true. People were already complaining about it back in 1974, when characters in *It's The Easter Beagle, Charlie Brown* went to a department store in April and saw Christmas displays up already.

One thing that changes every year, however, is Christmas presents. Televisions going mainstream in the 1950s played a big role in shaping Christmas present requests, as children were increasingly exposed to adverts for toys. In the 1940s, oranges were a popular Christmas treat. Predictions for the top Christmas presents in 2022 look a little different, with Barbie, Lego and Nintendo Switch topping the list.



Christmas trees have also changed. Artificial trees have become much more popular in recent years as people become more aware of the huge amount of waste created by Christmas. These days, 69 per cent of people in the UK prefer fake trees to real ones.

What about Christmas dinner? Some of your favourites would have been missing from the table a hundred years ago. Turkey is the typical Christmas dinner centrepiece these days, but in the past families often opted for cheaper options such as goose or mutton.

Meanwhile, classics like pigs in blankets and cranberry sauce are surprisingly recent additions to the Christmas Day spread. They are imports from America, and were invented in the 1950s and the 1940s, respectively.

On the other hand, buying a tin of fancy biscuits has been around for at least the last century!

Whatever your feelings towards Christmas, here's to spending it the best way: eating as much as you physically can and then dozing off in front of the Christmas specials. ■



BY ALICE GAWTHROP



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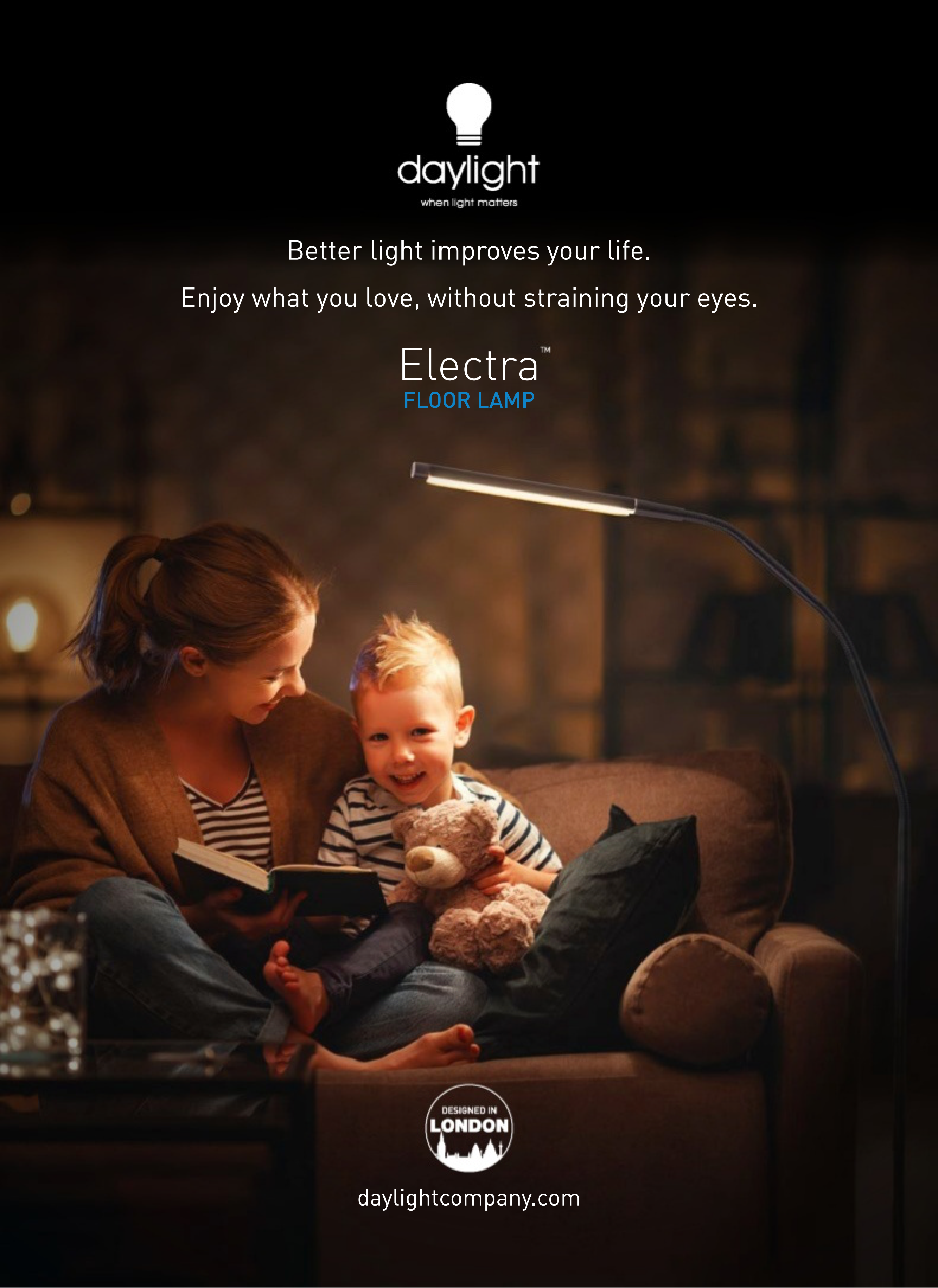
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